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ABSTRACT

The conferences were part of a series to review the whole field of postsecondary education policy in Britain in terms of changes in objectives, government processes, resources, and students. Papers on vocational education include: the present problems and position relating to vocational education (H.W. French); Technical Education Council progress (F. Fidgeon); some future developments of postsecondary vocational education (A. Richmond); a discussion of the current situation and trends in vocational education; and an introduction to and discussion of a project to identify anticipated changes in postsecondary vocational education in the next five years and develop a generalized scheme for college development. Papers on nonvocational education include: some present problems (A. Richmond); the future of nonvocational education as an element within otherwise vocational courses (C.A. Blackman); a personal view on the future of nonvocational education (E.E. Robinson); a report on a project to analyze the current situation and analyze trends in nonvocational education; a report on a project to identify anticipated changes in postsecondary nonvocational education in the next five years and draft a generalized scheme for college development; and compulsory part-time education in West Germany (A.H. Yates). (MSE)

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Coombe Lodge Report

Vol 8 No 5

Study Conference 75/11 and 75/14

The Development of FE II

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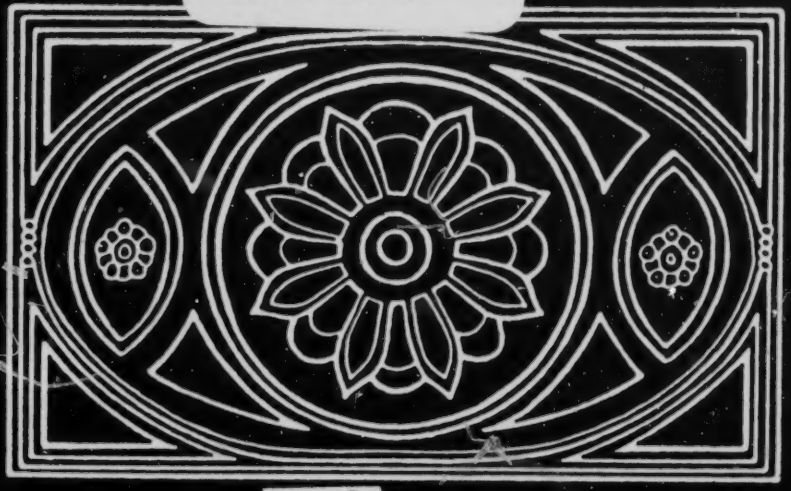

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CONTENTS

Foreword 218

Study Conference 75/11 - The College and Vocational Education.

The Present Problems and Position Relating to Vocational Education. 219
Dr H W French, Former Senior Chief Inspector, Department of Education & Science.

TEC Progress. 231
F Fidgeon, Deputy Chief Officer, Technician Education Council.

Some Future Developments of Vocational Further Education. 237
Sir Alan Richmond, Principal, Strode College, Street.

Project A Witness Session 250

Introduction to Project B 252
C T Ferguson, Staff Tutor, Coombe Lodge.

Witness Session 255

Participants 260

Bibliography 261

Study Conference 75/14 - The College and Non-Vocational Education.

Some Present Problems in the Field of Non-Vocational Education. 262
Sir Alan Richmond, Principal, Strode College, Street.

The Future of Non-Vocational Education as an Element Within Otherwise Vocational Courses. 273
C A Blackman, Head of Faculty of Humanities & Business Studies, Garnett College.

The Future of Non-Vocational Education : A Personal View. 284
E E Robinson, Principal, The Bradford College of Art & Technology.

Project A 289

Project B Witness Session 292

Compulsory Part Time Education in West Germany. 299
A H Yates, Director, Coombe Lodge.

Participants 303

Bibliography 304

FOREWORD

This is the second in a series of Reports of a number of integrated conferences which review the whole field of FE policy in terms of changes in aims and objectives, the processes of government, resources and students. Each conference focusses upon a specific theme, but all cover a certain amount of common ground. Papers presented at all or several of the conferences are published in the first Report of the series, Coombe Lodge Report Volume 8 Number 4, "The Development of FE I".

This issue is a Report of the first two conferences in the series, "D I - The College and Vocational Education" and "D 2 - The College and Non-Vocational Education". Vocational courses are interpreted as those which students enter with some prior committment to specific employment opportunities and non-vocational courses are regarded as these which students enter without prior committment to specific employment opportunities. Consideration is also given in the second conference to the non-vocational elements within otherwise vocational courses.

During the first part of each week members examined the present situation in order to identify possible trends for the future. Subsequently, effort was directed towards the anticipation of changes which will take place over the next five years and the production of a generalised scheme which would prove useful to individual colleges in preparing their development plans. Much of the work of the conferences took the form of small group discussions based on formal contributions from speakers, informal sessions with witnesses and consideration of papers prepared by Coombe Lodge Staff and members.

Dr H W French,
Former Senior
Chief Inspector
Department of
Education and
Science.

THE PRESENT PROBLEMS AND POSITION RELATING TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

"I must first make it clear that what I shall say in this paper will be my personal views. I can no longer talk on behalf on the DES and, moreover, I can guarantee that much of what I say would not find favour with the DES. Perhaps I might note one biographical detail, as it has considerable bearing upon what I shall say: although my concern for most of my career - some forty years or so in education, of which 26 were at the DES - was with FE alone, when I changed from being Chief Inspector for FE to Senior Chief Inspector, towards the end of my time at the Department, I became involved with primary and secondary education as well.

My brief is rather a tall order! I was asked to present 'a comprehensive analysis of the present philosophical, institutional and curriculum problems facing those concerned with vocational education in the next five years'. This, I feel, is beyond my capacity, so I shall select certain areas which I hope will prove both controversial and helpful.

Early vocational education

As soon as I began to prepare this paper a few questions immediately occurred to me. Firstly, what is vocational education? It is obviously that area of education which is specifically directed towards some form of employment, and a great deal of the work we do in colleges of FE could be so defined. This, then, is the 'white area'. But there is also a 'grey area'. Perhaps I might explain this with an example. Let us suppose that a student is taking an OND in Engineering and has two objectives: he knows that if he passes he will go into industry as a technician; he also knows that if he does well enough he will be able to proceed to an engineering degree. Whichever of the two aims he achieves, the OND, in this context, is vocational education. A second student might aim directly for an engineering degree. He will take GCE 'A' levels, perhaps in the same college of FE. The two students therefore have the same objective - entry to a degree course. Yet while the OND is a vocational course the 'A' level is rarely regarded as such. This is one example of the 'grey area' into which I propose to stray, for reasons which I hope will become clear.

My two other initial questions I shall coalesce. They are 'when should vocational education begin?' and 'where should its beginnings be located?'. In some countries, particularly in Europe, vocational education courses begin as early as twelve years of age, and I have no doubt that this is far too early. On the other hand there are countries - and the UK is a prime example - in which it has been regarded as almost indecent to include and vocational element in the secondary school programme. I remember, as a young teacher, reading of a German professor who commented that almost anything could be learned in British secondary schools as long as it was not useful. This was an exaggeration then, and would be less applicable now, but, even so, compared

with most other countries our secondary school curricula are very generalised and almost completely non-vocational, except perhaps in the last year of some courses, especially in the commercial field.

Yet we used to have vocationally oriented schools - the secondary technical schools which were commonly located in colleges of FE. Speaking as an engineer, I thought their standard of engineering work was commendable, and so did industry, which valued their projects. It is true that they were difficult to run. Sometimes they seemes to be a cuckoo in the FE nest and at times the two groups of staff did not mix well. On the other hand, many of these schools demonstrated how successfully the secondary and FE establishments and their staffs could work together for the betterment of student opportunity. Secondary technical schools were sacrificed upon the altar of academic respectability. The Newsom Report of 196[illegible] which recommended practical, realistic vocational philosophies made a little headway, but then came a tendency to generalise secondary education as much as possible so that anything of a vocational nature was swallowed up in the 'total curriculum' concept.

USA

It is interesting to note that this occurred in the USA and that they have now swung back again, reasserting their traditional educational pragmatism. This manifests itself in what is termed 'career education'. Washington has issued a booklet entitled 'Careers Education - a Handbook for Implementation'. The initial objective is firmly and clearly stated,

> "the preparation for successful working careers shall be a key objective of all education".

The result has been a move towards a greater vocational education content in the secondary curriculum and also the setting up of Vocational-Technical Secondary Schools ('Votecs'). These offer courses for 15-18 or 14-18 year olds and therefore are not far removed from our old secondary technical schools which catered for 13-18 year olds.

It is worth looking at the reasons the Americans adopted for making this change:-

1) the over-production of graduates with, in consequence,
2) an inadequate number of technicians,
3) a shortage of skilled workers, and
4) an increase in the proportion of drop-outs in secondary education accompanied by indiscipline, and disenchantment with schools. A high proportion of lower ability, including coloured children, fall into this category.

Surely some of this has a familiar ring. What are we doing to avoid these problems before they become as acute in this country as they are in the USA?

ROSLA

We appear to have acted extremely strangely. Before the raising of the school leaving age a 15 year old could take a truly vocational course, such as pre-apprentice course, in a college of FE. He can no longer do this. We are short of skilled men at the present time, yet we have effectively raised

the age at which skilled training can begin from 15 to 16, and virtually prevented that initial training from being given in the institutions best equipped and staffed to give it, namely the colleges of FE.

vocational education before 16

How can we recover this lost ground? Better still, how can we improve on what we had before? My view is that we need good careers education in the schools beginning at 13 or 14 years of age and that colleges of FE could assist in this to a far greater extent than they do at present. We should try to find out the career objectives of our youngsters and attempt to give them courses which still lead them to those objectives. For those who are going to leave at 16, their last year, and possible part of their penultimate year, should have a vocational content. I do not mean that they should be specific courses with a large training element. I am not suggesting that a youngster who wants to become a bricklayer should be taught how to lay bricks, but he might instead be given a general, practical introduction to building crafts. The same will apply for young people who want to go into other fields such as engineering or business studies. Thus I would like to see in the courses taken by 15 or 16 year olds who wish to leave school at the statutory leaving age a larger element of vocationally baissed education than is usually found in schools.

Could the schools offer such a course satisfactorily? I think some schools could do it fairly well, but equally there are large number of schools which would not be able to do it well at all, and a few which would possible do more harm than good if they tried. Therefore I would like to see an arrangement whereby these vocational elements of the school curriculum are carried out in the colleges of FE. In other words, I was always opposed to the raising of the school leaving age in the form it took. I believe that we should instead have raised the upper limit of compulsory education. This would have meant that final year pupils could do their last year in whatever type of institution was appropriate. This is not possible at the present time, and would require a change in the law. Our attempts to give school leavers FE experience now takes the form of linked courses, which in some colleges are as much as two or two and a half days a week. Tha vast majority of these courses are, however, awkward to run and many are two disjointed blocks of education without any real connection between them. I did not suceed in my arguments for the raising of the age of compulsory education partly because the school teachers unions opposed this and preferred the raising of the school leaving age, and partly because ATTI feared that the schools would unload their poorest and least able and most ill-disciplined pupils on to the colleges of FE. This was in fact not the intention at all. The intention was that the 15 year olds would be accepted if they wanted to go into FE, if their headmasters agreed and if the college principal was willing to accept them.

I think it is worth looking at the situation again, in the light of one year's experience of ROSLA. A re-appraisal might also be warranted for other reasons which are not strictly education. Firstly, colleges of FE have reduced their intake by losing the 15 year olds. Secondly, the general level of intake into FE is flattening off. While the full-time figures are rising, they are doing so at a reduced rate in comparison with previous years, and part-time numbers are actually falling. This is at a time when the birth rate figures of 16 to 18

years ago were rising, so we now have to seriously consider whether the rising curve for FE to which we have become accustomed will continue. Thirdly, as I shall demonstrate later, demographic factors will make it difficult for FE to continue growing. Finally, the present climate of financial stringency will militate against dual provision in schools and FE. It is likely that there might be a drive to see if it might be possible to coalesce some of the activities which exist in both sectors.

the lessable

Thus it is my belief that there are some 15 year olds wishing to follow vocational courses and are capable of doing so who and should be allowed to do so in colleges of FE. Secondly, I think we need more vocationally oriented courses in the penultimate year of school, perhaps linked with colleges of FE. Thirdly, and most controversially, I wonder whether colleges of FE should be brought in to help with the education in their final year of compulsory education of the 'fourth quartile'. These are youngsters which the colleges of FE have never before dealt with, the really difficult, lower ability groups. I suggested, when the school leaving age was raised, that we should try to help these groups by setting up courses in household services, so that their education could be directed towards the practical. There is no doubt that these low ability groups are not interested in the kind of education they have received and been unable to cope with in the past. A more practical approach might reduce indiscipline, give them a 'relevant' objective, and perhaps even kindle a few educational sparks. I believe that this area of work might be best done in colleges of FE, despite the fact that in general FE teachers have had little experience of dealing with this level of intelligence. I believe that a man who has spent several years as a plumber or bricklayer before going into teaching could probably get through to these youngsters rather more easily than a teacher who has been through the closed circuit of school, college of education and back to school. I have in mind courses lasting three to six months.

16-19

Turning to the 16-19 age group, as I noted earlier, in the light of the current financial problems, any duality of provision is likely to be critically examined by local education authorities and the Inspectorate. HMI carried out a survey recently, investigating the sixth forms of 70 schools. We discovered several hundred teaching groups of six or less, and in some schools almost 25% of the teaching groups had three or less pupils - and this in schools where there were groups of over thirty in the middle forms! This, in my view, is ill-deployment of teachers. For comparative purposes we also carried out some of the exercises in FE colleges, for example we studies total provision for the 16-19 group in one large county borough. It was found that colleges of FE also had a large number of small classes but the proportion was not nearly so great as in the sixth forms. There was, nevertheless, some inexcusable duplication of provision. For example, one college of FE had a class of two students doing Spanish while 300 yards away at the grammer school there was a sixth form group of three people doing Spanish.

What solutions can be found to these problems of handling the 16-19 age group in the FE field? One obvious solution is the all-in 16-19 college such as those at Exeter, Barnstaple and Darlington. We must however bear in mind that the number of institutions working in this way is small, the amount of evidence available about them is also small and the experiment is too short-lived to warrent any firm conclusions. It is essential, I believe, that this type of college is fully integrated. A bipartate establishment with grammar school education in one block and FE in another will not succeed, and may produce a worse situation than when they are completely separate. The tertiary college arrangment is a logical one, for colleges of FE have for many years included 'sixth form' work among their activities. Indeed, I remember remarking at a conference some years ago that the largest 'sixth form' in the country was in a certain Manchester college of FE. Therefore the colleges of FE are not taking on anything very new if they develop into tertiary colleges, although, of course, the balance of the college is altered, and this is important. Another effect of the tertiary college is that it chops of the top of the 11-18 school (so, of course, does the sixth form college) and may consequently reduce the quality of the teaching staff in the 11-16 institutions which remain. However, the arrangement makes good economic sense, especially in rural situations where the alternative is small sixth forms and dual provision in FE institutions.

Where numbers are great and concentrated, for example in large county boroughs, there is much to be said for maintaining secondary schools with sixth forms with GCE 'A' level work also being offered in the colleges of FE, so that those who want to continue in the ethos of the school can do so and those who want to work in a different atmosphere can also do so. But in order to rationalise provision, the LEA should consider 16-19 provision as a whole. No doubt sensible arrangements can be reached between schools and colleges of FE to reduce the number of subjects each offers and save costs. Clearly, highly vocational courses such as full-time CGLI courses and ONDs should be handled by the FE college. The non-vocational GCE 'A' level groupings might be largely catered for by the schools and 'A' level groupings in vocational options by the colleges of FE. Of course there would still be an overlap, for example English would have to be provided in FE colleges to back up subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and technical drawing. The comforting factor is that 'A' level offered in 12 subjects covers 80% of students needs in schools and the number would possibly be even less in FE.

In order to achieve the necessary choices between schools and colleges, with the greatest degree of economy it may be necessary for some teachers to work in both places.

education and training

A second area of overlap is that between education and training. The traditional philosophy in this country is that vocational education is provided by the colleges of FE and training by industry. Before the war, when I was training as a technician, the training consisted of 'sitting next to Nellie' and the education took place in the evenings, for at that time there was no day release. Since then, there has been the development of part-time day release and better training. I have noticed over the last year or two an increasing number of articles which propose that the dichotomy between education and

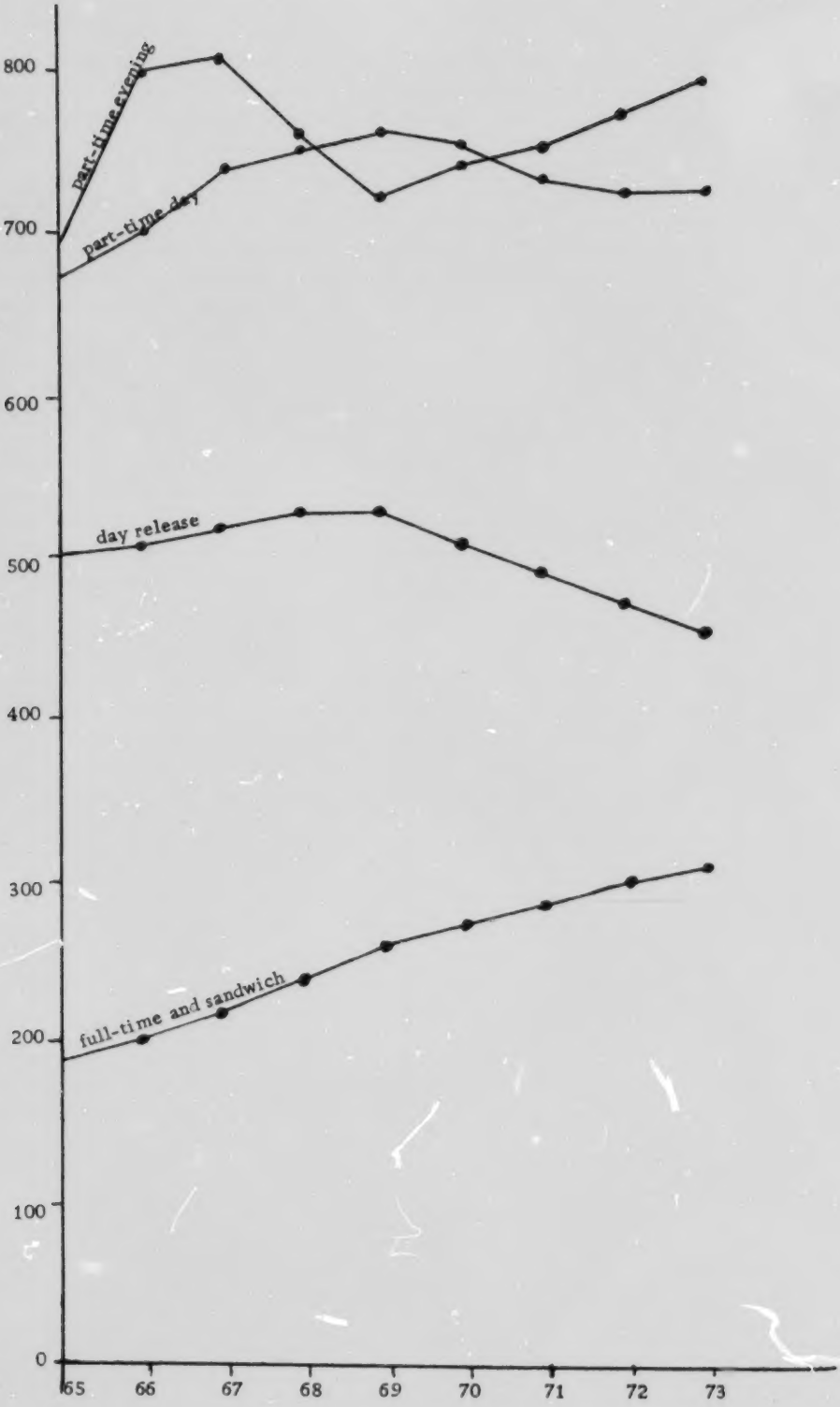
training should end. In many other countries, education and training are integrated. Is it practicable to do this in the UK? We have different levels of worker - operative, craftsman, two levels of technician and the technologist. Each has different needs. The operative needs a short course before he can work, and it is almost wholly training ie. learning how to use machinery. The right place for him to learn this is on the job. Craftsmen work largely by the skill of their hands, so probably need about 80% training and 20% education. Technicians, on the other hand, need a great deal more educational background than this.

Therefore, the part-time day release pattern is not suited to everyone. The common format of one day a week in college - a shorter day than those spent in the works - means that about 18% of the students time is spent on education. This format is not suitable to everyone, particularly technicians. For this reason, many courses such as the National Certificate course require attendance at college for one day plus one evening, but often this is not enough either. The sandwich course allows half the time to be spent at college and half on the job. This, in my view, is a more suitable arrangement for technicians, though different types of technicians do have different requirements.

In recent years we have seen the growth of arrangements whereby firms sent their first year craftsmen and possibly technicians to college for a full academic year with the education and training apportioned as the college thinks right. This allows the college the flexibility to devise courses to suit everyone. I think some of our best initial courses are to be found among the first year integrated courses run by colleges. They are recognised as a great success by industry and during the year 1974/75 there was a 50% increase in the number of young people taking these courses. I believe they could be expanded much further, for there is no better way of making people useful quickly. For many technicians, a second year full-time integrated course in college would be beneficial, but I do not suggest that we should adopt the French system whereby all education and training takes place in the college. There is a time when young people should start learning in the job situation which for operatives should come early, for craftsmen no later than the end of the first year, though for technicians perhaps later.

I believe that the colleges should be ready to develop new areas of activity if others begin to diminish. Figure 1 shows the pattern of advanced and non-advanced provision between 1965 and 1973. Full-time and sandwich courses show a steady rise until, for the first ominous time, the provisional figure for 1973 is the same as for 1972. Part-time day and day release figures have been falling, and it is interesting to note that at the same time part-time evening numbers have risen. The fall in part-time day release mirrors the economic position of the country. As times become tougher, industries cut back on training. When an upturn occurs in the financial climate firms will find they are short of the necessary trained manpower. Where firms do train, they will do so only in firm-oriented jobs, rather than long term transferable skills which are particularly important in the crafts and technicians areas. This situation, which has commenced already, will get worse unless specific action is taken.

FIGURE 1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transferable skills

The answer, in my view, is for colleges to take on training in transferable skills in addition to their committment to more general vocational education. They should offer good first and possible second year courses of education and training in transferable skills.

Such a development would of course require funds. I think we should cease to organise the industrial training levy and grant so that it is based upon the firm's own training activities and instead operate it through the Training Services Agency, pool the money from all employers and use this to pay for full-time integrated courses of education and training. If this system were used, the question would then be raised of whether the TSA would develop its Skills Centres to provide these courses or whether it would be prepared for the colleges of FE to take on this responsibility. This is a delicate issue. At present the Skill Centres would offer these courses more economically because they do not employ teachers paid at teacher rates. Therefore, if colleges were to take on this role, they would have to give some thought to whether it might not be desirable for colleges to have instructors as well as lecturers, that is, people who are engaged to do the type of work which instructors carry out in Skill Centres, namely, simply to demonstrate the mechanism of doing a job and to supervise the trainee as he does it. My own view is that this is a job, which unlike teaching, does not involve massive preparation or marking and therefore does not need to be done by lecturers.

initial job training

As well as full-time training in transferable skills I believe that FE colleges could take on initial job training for a high proportion of school leavers. Nowhere in Europe are so few school leavers involved in some form of organised education and training. In Germany the equivalent of apprenticeship covers 80% of the jobs which young people take up and in Sweden the figure is well over 60%. The initial job training could be a broad based course and apply equally to those youngsters who have not yet become employed.

Broad based initial job training and training for transferable skills, while being funded partly by the employers through a central pool operated by the TSA could also receive funds from central Government. It would be difficult to convince firms that they should pay for it all when much of the benefit will be to the individual rather than the employer, although there is no doubt that a carefully planned training in a related range of skills would substantially raise the ability of young workers, helping them to adapt to change during their working lives, raising the potential of the work force and increasing the ease of transferability as the economic needs of the country dictate.

To summarise, then my suggestion is that the colleges could run:-

a) one year full-time courses of education and training for 'transferable skills' to be followed for craftsmen by on the job training and day release by right and for technicians with possibly a second year integrated course or on the job training plus day release.

b) wide-based courses in broad-banded areas such as retail distribution or engineering construction lasting three to six months for the mass of young people who at present receive no training at all. These courses could be composed of 40-50% general education and 50-60% practical work.

Both these types of course could help the young unemployed and both could include, unless this has already been covered in school, the elementary facts of the industrial and economic life so that young people can realise the effects upon the country and upon individuals of such factors as the increase in the cost of raw materials, and wage claims. I think it is a matter for debate whether the second type of course the 'conditioning for employment' should take place at the last stage of schooling or immediately afterwards. As things stand, it is more likely to be the latter, (although I find the former preferable) but whichever one were decided, there would be a large new committment for colleges of FE - a committment to training.

On the nature of the courses themselves I believe that at craft level there is a need to return to something which resembles craft practice courses, for many young people taking craft studies courses which are designed to complement ITB training are in fact not getting adequate training. Of course, the development of full-time first year integrated courses would remove this difficulty.

At technician level I put my faith in TEC and BEC. I welcome the flexibility which TEC is building into its programmes and am sure that it will thereby eventually secure the removal of the wasteful near-duplication associated with the present dual route to technician status.

colleges of education

My final comments concern the diversification of colleges of education, which I know is causing some anxiety. While it makes good sense to diversfy colleges of education by linking them to colleges of FE and polytechnics, so that the places made vacant by the reduction in teacher training can be used by the new institution as a whole, there are some fears that if colleges of education remain alone or join with others, and have their teacher training intake reduced they will fill their empty places with twp 'A' level entry courses. The students with one 'A' level or five 'O' levels will seek courses in colleges of FE which will have to concentrate on lower level work while the former colleges of education take over a large proportion of the higher level courses.

In my view there is not much to worry about on the vocational side, for colleges of education which diversify are likely to do so mainly in the liberal arts fields. Some science-based Dip HE courses which they offer may be a threat but the two 'A' level entry to the Dip HE will, I think, tend to ensure that as now, those students with two 'A' levels go on to degree courses and those with one 'A' level go on to HND. Therefore, I do not envisage the diversification of the colleges of education having a very detrimental effect on the colleges of FE as they will, I think, avoid the areas of vocational education on which the colleges of FE concentrate.

future demands

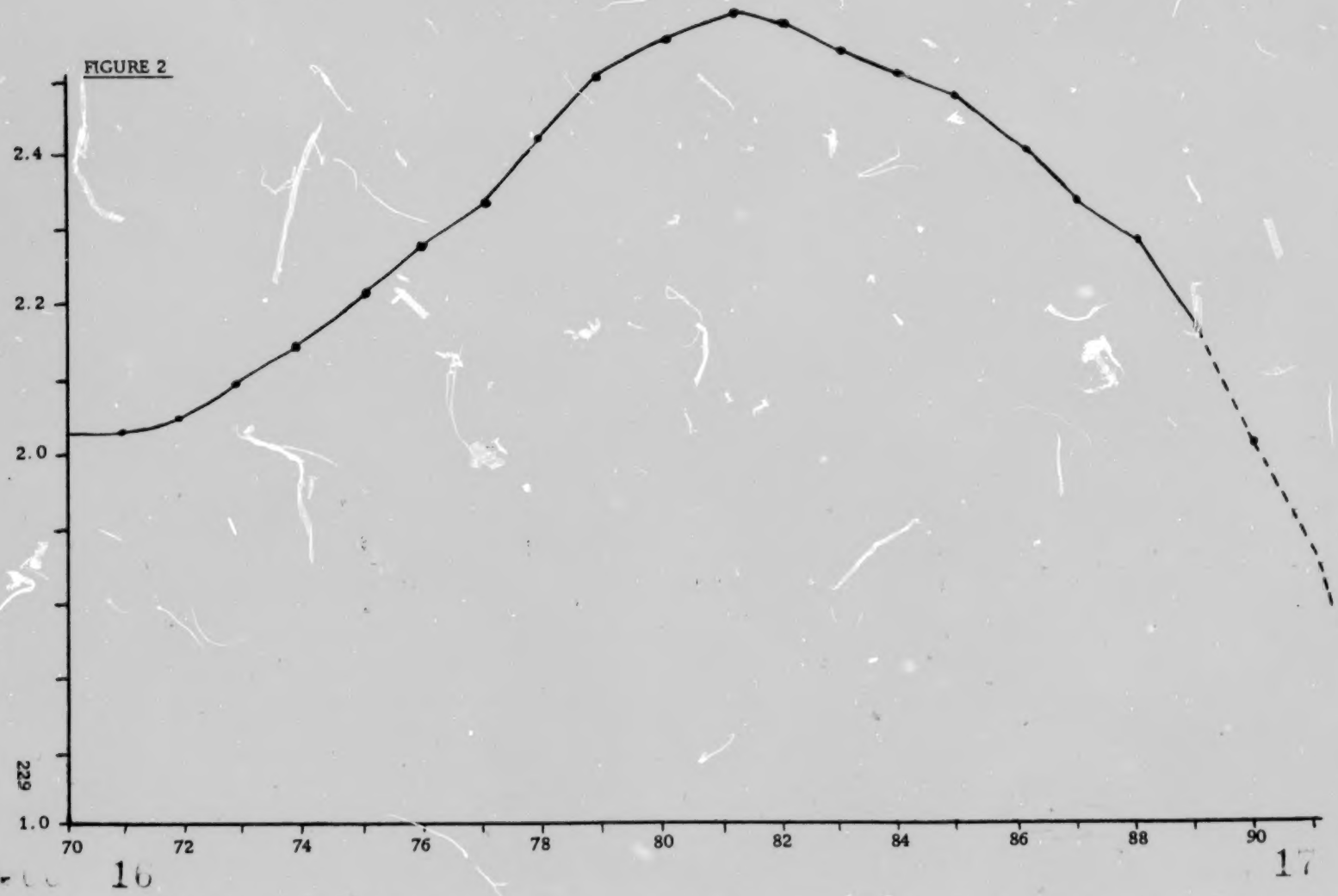
The reduction in enrolments in science and technology courses at universities, polytechnics, colleges of FE and colleges of education is likely to result in the need for a harder look at resource utilisation, including teachers, possible redundancies in science staff and the need to retain redundant teachers. This is a somewhat grim prospect and gives all the more point to my suggestions for opening colleges of FE to 15 year olds and taking on more training. There seems to be a levelling off in the demand for higher education as a whole but Mr Wilson indicated in a recent speech that non-university higher education was to be accorded a high priority, receiving for its building programme in the next financial year £20.75m compared with £15m in the universities. This may mean that more students will take higher education in the non-university sector than in the universities in the 1980s. The projected figure of 750,000 students in higher education by 1981 has now been reduced to 640,000. While the earlier figures was divided equally between the two sectors, no breakdown has yet been made of the new estimate.

Furthermore, teacher training figures have been reduced from an earlier projection of 510,000 by 1981 to about 480,000. To see the reasons for this, and the likely long term effects, I will have to look further than my original five year remit.

Birthrate numbers have reduced by 25% in the last ten years and may soon fall below zero growth rate. The 1972 White Paper's projections have already been affected. For example it stated that if 90% of four year olds and 50% of three year olds are given nursery education, in 1981, 700,000 places would be necessary. The new birth rate figures indicate that only 550,000 places will be needed. With 375,000 places already, there are only 175,000 extra places needed. We should manage to achieve this despite cuts. Similarly, there are at present five million children between five and eleven at school. There will be only four million places needed by 1981 and 3,75 million or less by 1986. Secondary school numbers are still rising. At present they stand at 3.5 million and by 1977 there will be a need for 4 million places but by 1981 the need will have fallen to 3.75 million and by 1986 to three million.

These figures, will, of course, affect FE eventually. Figure 2 demonstrates how the three year age range, 16-19, will vary as we pass from the 1970s, through the 1980s and into the 1990s. We cannot tell, of course, how the percentage of youngsters entering FE will alter, but as source figures fall, customer numbers can only be maintained if more attractions are offered. For the first time in my experience, FE will not operate under conditions where numbers are increasing at more than the rate of facilities. The pressure will lessen to some extent and we shall have to learn to plan for these conditions and derive the maximum benefit from them."

FIGURE 2



Discussion Arising

demarkation

A member warned that trade unions might resist the growth of training in transferable skills because it might result in the contravening of demarcation rules. Dr French thought that providing the training covered cognate skills, there need not be any demarcation problem. It was essential that training should cover a range of skills, because people had to be prepared for working lives in which the nature of their work would change two or three times. If they had a broad-based training they would be able to move from one type of work to another with the minimum of retraining.

early specialisation

Dr French's argument for beginning vocational education while still at school was welcomed by several members of the conference. One participant commented that people were at present over-protected from making a wrong choice of career too early. Providing it was possible to change direction, and this would be made easier by the development of modular courses, early specialisation was welcome. Dr French emphasised that his suggestion that vocationally baissed courses should begin early - at 13 or 14 - only applied to non-academic groups who already sensed that they had failed at academic school work. It would be best to retain broad, non-vocational courses for the brighter students who were intending to go on to higher education.

community projects

The comment was made that students were more interested in learning about the needs of people in society than receiving a factual training. Dr French sympathised with this view, saying that it was part of the role of the FE institution to contribute to the needs of the whole man or woman. However, his terms of reference had been to speak of vocational education and its future in the next five years, and he could not see a drastic move in this direction within that time span. Moreover, he thought FE should help the student to cope with the world as it was, rather than as the student wished it to be and might, perhaps, later make it.

low ability students

The discussion ended with a debate about how the FE college could cope if it opened its doors to the least able. The general consensus was that there would be difficulties, but such a development would succeed if staff were really committed. There was agreement that the present system whereby career advancement resulted from concentration on high level work was deplorable. It should be possible to specialise in work at lower grades and still get promotion.

F Fidgeon,
Deputy Chief
fficer, Technician
Education Council.

TEC PROGRESS

"Since the publication of the Policy Statement in June 1974 the Council has completed the setting up of the initial membership of its 3 Sector Committees and 22 Programme Committees. These committees will have executive responsibility as far as course structure and the validation of programmes of study from the colleges are concerned. The Council consulted about 200 organisations involved in technician education and training about the initial membership and aimed to produce at least $\frac{1}{3}$ representation from both teaching and industry and the remainder from other bodies such as the training boards, and other qualifying bodies etc. The one third representation from industry illustrates the importance we attach to industrial involvement in TEC.

The Sector and Programme Committees have recently completed their second round of meetings when they considered such items as "the aims of TEC programmes", "the aims of general and communication studies" and the format of college submissions. Further publications and guidelines on items of this type should be produced within the next few months.

TEC programmes

One of TEC's functions will be to rationalise the existing provision and develop a unified national system of courses to meet the needs of technicians within industry. At present there are 90 different award-making bodies within the technician field and they rarely communicate with each other. TEC has to take over all these bodies and produce a unified system. As stated in the Policy Statement, the courses TEC will replace include all the present Joint Committee courses under the National Certificate system - ONCs, ONDs, HNCs and HNDs - and all the CGLI Technician courses. TEC programmes of study will lead to four awards only - the Technician Certificate and Diploma, and the Higher Certificate and Diploma. The aim will be to create a more flexible and simpler range of courses than the present system, eliminating as far as possible unnecessary duplication of provision.

The flexibility of the system must allow for programmes to cater for students with varying abilities and at the same time the programmes must meet the needs of the technicians in industry. The personal needs of students such as entry into higher education or membership of a qualifying body should be met by choosing an appropriate programme of study or by taking appropriate supplementary units. The Council feels that this flexibility together with flexible entry requirements can be met by a unit based system of programmes with credit awards. A mixture of essential and optional units should allow for programmes of study that will meet the varying needs of students in industry. TEC will therefore be able to meet demands for both academic courses and more practical courses required by some employers and some students. The flexibility of the system will ensure that we retain opportunities for students taking this

level of study to go on to higher education, but, having said that, it is not TEC's role to design programmes to meet the needs of higher education. TEC's task is to devise courses of study to meet the needs of technicians within industry. We believe that as long as students follow a programme, taking units at the necessary level, they should still be acceptable to universities and polytechnics for higher education courses. If it so happens that a student is on a programme of study which does not give him the necessary units, in, say, mathematics or physics, he may have to do supplementary units. Thus with a unit-based system the opportunity exists for a student to take units to meet his own personal needs as well as those of his firm. TEC is holding discussions with bodies such as the CNAA and university committees to try to ensure that our system of awards will be acceptable. The same applies to qualifying bodies to ensure that TEC awards are acceptable either as a straight programme or with the addition of supplementary units. We are therefore speaking with such bodies as the Engineering Registration Board.

TEC awards

As I have implied, programmes of study leading to the award of a TEC certificate or diploma could vary considerably depending upon the identified needs of the technicians. TEC is anxious that employers needs are met as fully as possible and this can best be achieved by colleges devising their own programmes in accordance with the needs of local industry. This will produce variations in TEC programmes and with this in mind the Council has decided that:

a) the units successfully completed by the student should be recorded on his certificate, together with a simple classification of his performance in each unit;
b) there should be no grading of TEC awards.

In making this decision, the Council has recognised that employers, universities and polytechnics, and professional bodies will often need to have quite detailed information about the programme of study of the student.

standard units and standard programmes

It would naturally be a waste of resources if every college devised all its own units when some units are likely to be very similar to those offered in other colleges. Therefore the Council has announced its intention of providing standard units which colleges can incorporate into their programmes. These units will frequently be related to 'common core' subjects and are likely to be most suitable for programmes up to Certificate and Diploma level. Many colleges which intend to submit schemes to the Council are anxious to include standard units and to relate the planning of their own proposals to such units. The Council has therefore decided to give a high priority to the production of a bank of standard units and this will be one of the main activities of the Programme Committees.

In order to help the Programme Committees identify standard units and the likely content of such units, the Council decided to obtain suitable information by use of the following methods:-

a) The work of eight Curriculum Development groups set up throughout the Country;
b) a commissioned project leading to the identification of certain common subjects. A Principal Lecturer from a college of technology has been seconded to TEC for a year and he is working in cooperation with other colleges, Industrial Training Boards and industry to try to identify common core material such as physics and mathematics which is required across the board;
c) information submitted by individual colleges and teachers.

Each Curriculum Development group consists of a small number of colleges covering a small geographical area. The initial work of each group will be to identify groups of technicians and their educational needs in co-operation with the Industrial Training Boards and local industry. In this way it is hoped to pin-point likely standard units and identify the content of such units. It is hoped to publish the titles of some of the standard units some time in the middle of the year and this will be followed by the content of the units late in the year.

The published standard units will be made available to all colleges at the same time and all colleges will have an equal opportunity to start programmes at the same time, ie on the date quoted in the timetable, subject to the necessary approvals and other factors referred to in the timetable circular.

The Programme Committees will also be considering the provision of standard programmes which will be available in due course to those colleges which require them.

recent developments

The submission is most important, for this is what establishes standards initially. Therefore TEC will require a considerable amount of information from course submissions. Colleges will be expected to identify the technicians and the jobs which they will be doing; and state the aims and objectives of the programme of study. The Committee have recently been considering the format for submission of units and programmes. Of the methods considered the Committee tended to favour the writing of unit content in the form of learning objectives.

It is likely that the Council will recommend that most standard units should be written in the learning objective format but because we realise that many staff in colleges will have no experience of writing course content in this format, for a period of time college-devised units should be accepted in the form of a syllabus as long as the depth of treatment for each topic is indicated clearly. It was thought that the learning objective format had the following advantages:-

a) the depth of treatment intended for all topics should be more apparent to the teachers;
b) students and their employers would be more aware of what has to be achieved;
c) related assessment schemes should be easier to design.

General and Communication Studies must be included in all programmes leading to TEC awards. It is likely that in programmes leading to the award of the Certificate and Diploma generally at least 15% of the programme time will be set aside for General and Communication Studies and this will exclude time for the communication of technical information. If colleges wish, General and Communication Studies may be integrated into the technical units. The aims and objectives of these units must be included in the course submission. General and Communication Studies should be assessed and students will be required to complete them satisfactorily in order to qualify for a TEC award. However, the Council acknowledges that there are certain aspects of these units which it may be impossible to assess. In such cases, the reasons for not assessing will have to be set out in the course submission.

notable-phasing in of TEC programmes and awards

For the reasons explained in the Policy Statement, the replacement of existing courses and awards will be a phased operation extending over a period of years. The Council has consulted a number of national bodies working in the technician field about priorities in replacing existing provision and has produced a provisional timetable which is now being sent out to colleges. The Council will consult the Joint Committees and CGLI about the timetable.

In the case of most programmes the earliest date will be September 1976. The Council recognised that it would be unrealistic to expect all colleges to start new programmes at the same time as there are bound to be differences in the speed at which colleges react to TEC proposals. It is likely that most of the rest of the Certificate or Diploma courses will begin in 1977 and 1978. Higher Certificate and Diploma courses would then commence in 1978. Some programmes will be late in starting, for example hotel and catering courses, because it will be quite a major task to identify the technicians within these area and decide their needs. Surprisingly enough the same applies to motor vehicles courses. Programmes in this field are unlikely to start before 1978.

It is envisaged that there could be a limited number of starts in 1975 but these would be mainly existing college certificate or diploma programmes where the students, at present, cannot get a nationally accepted award.

work for the colleges

It is known that a number of colleges are busy writing the content of units and programmes. The Council is not encouraging colleges to become heavily involved with this type of work at this stage. Some units will be produced as standard units and it would be a waste of resources for all colleges to be producing units of this type. It is essential that adequate liaison takes place with local industry in order to identify the technicians and their educational needs before carrying out too much work on the design of programmes. Colleges could be looking at the following areas of work:-

a) liaison with industry;
b) the implications of implementing a unit based scheme within a college or group of colleges;
c) the work involved in writing learning objectives;
d) the assessment process and related assessment schemes.

TEC wants to see assessment related to the aims and objectives of the course and this could mean that a variety of different types of assessment will be needed for a course.

advantages of unit based schemes

Advantages of unit based schemes should be seen in the following areas:-

a) flexibility in course structure and entry requirements;
b) student motivation;
c) the development of the learning process;

The influence on student motivation and the development of the learning process could depend on how the scheme is implemented within a college or group of colleges.

A unit based scheme should allow a student to make continuous progress and keep them to some extent in phase with their development as a technician in industry. This progress will depend upon the flexibility of the programmes, the design of the units and programmes and the timetabling. The same points together with the use of common studies and other standard units should lead to the development of the learning situation including team teaching, small group learning and self learning."

Discussion Arising

submissions

On a point of information, Mr Fidgeon was asked whether TEC had any specific format in mind for the submission of course proposals. Was it necessary, for example, to state general course objectives, lesson objectives and detailed objectives?

Mr Fidgeon replied that this suggestion was in line with TEC thinking. There were a variety of ways in which aims and objectives could be stated. The Council would be producing an example before the end of the summer term, though this did not have to be religiously followed.

industrial liaison

In trying to meet the needs of local industry, how could colleges cope with the conflicting demands of different firms? Mr Fidgeon said that the most important factor in liasing with local firms was to get past the training officers and personnel officers to the people who are really in touch with the work of technicians and therefore know their needs. Colleges should not construct a course first and then ask for the comments of industry. It was far better for them to devise the syllabus after discussion with firms.

It was true, said Mr Fidgeon, that different firms had different requirements. TEC had three aims: to meet the needs of industry on a national level; to meet the needs of industry of a local level; and to meet students' personal needs. The Council would probably concentrate most on meeting the needs of industry at a national level and would cater for these with essential units.

Varying local needs could then probably be met by optional units. TEC was encouraging colleges to collaborate and students might have to attend a second college for certain optional units.

non-award students

Mr Fidgeon affirmed that TEC unit classes would be open to students who were not registered on a particular TEC programme. Moreover, as it was a credit system, such students could if they wished take enough units to achieve an award.

Sir Alan Richmond,
Principal, Strode
College, Street.

SOME FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS OF VOCATIONAL FURTHER EDUCATION

recent history

In 1959, the Central Advisory Council for Education - England, otherwise known as the Crowther Committee, issued a Report entitled 15 - 18, in which the Committee wrote:-

> "Further Education will, we believe, be the next great battleground of English Education".

In attempting today to gaze into the crystal ball concerning the future development of vocational further education, we may perhaps commence by asking whether Crowther's battle has been joined and if so, with what results.

The period up to 1959, during which the Crowther Committee sat, was the period of office of Sir David Eccles as Minister of Education, and included the setting up of the National Council for Technological Awards, the Inauguration of the Dip Tech Award and the then tremendous injection of some £100m of capital expenditure to secure the first significant post-war expansion in vocational further education in this country. It was therefore natural for the Crowther Committee to anticipate upheavals and developments in further education.

In the event, it seems to me that the battle has never been joined. It is true, of course, that there have been significant developments and a measure of evolution in the further education sector. Before any battle in regard to the development of further education in the early sixties could be joined, the battleground had shifted from further education to higher education as a result of the Report, in 1963, of the Robbins Committee. Capital investment was substantially diverted for Higher Education objects. The conversion of the Colleges of Advanced Technology into Universities, the status race of Regional Colleges and of some Colleges of Education towards University status as suggested by the Robbins Report and the subsequent policy of Governments of both parties in favour of the establishment of a public sector of higher education, brings the historical perspective quickly up to date.

The White Paper entitled "Better Opportunities in Technical Education", published in 1961, has always seemed to me to be a still-born affair so far as its central theme was concerned, albeit a number of developments sprang from it, mainly in so-called Liberal Studies. The missed opportunity of the 1961 White Paper was followed by a Report of the Committee on Technician Courses and Examinations (the Haslegrave Report of 1969). This Report, as defined by its title, dealt only with technician education and not with the whole range of other student needs in the Further Education sector. It took until 1973 to announce the establishment of the Technician Education Council (TEC) and until 1974 for the corresponding action in regard to the Business Education Council (BEC). At the time of this paper in early 1975, TEC is

still very much engrossed in the definition of its tasks and methods, while BEC has not yet progressed beyond the appointment of a Chief Officer and some initial meetings. It is not to be expected that the two Councils together will make a very substantial impact on Technician courses for another three to five years, while there is no pattern or prospect for purposeful evolution of other types of courses.

definitions of terms

It would be well to define terms in the hope that this may help precision of thought about the many difficult issues involved.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a "vocation" as a "sense of fitness for a career or occupation", while "education" is "a course of systematic instruction". Similarly, "training" is defined as the process whereby a person is brought to "a desired state or standard of efficiency by instruction and practice".

Do we see an artificial separation of the concept of education and training in the two definitions which the OED provides? Do we accept a degree of overlap from the compilers of the OED, who may not be expected perhaps to have in mind the specialised meanings which we attach to such words as part of our daily work, or is the overlap and confusion an indication of a deeper dichotomy between the concepts of education and training which we have not resolved in this country, either in terms of organisational structures or in terms of our own philosophies? The definitions raise in particular the questions of how one becomes "fit" in 1975 to follow a vocation and how one remains "fit to do so in the year 2000, if one's working life is likely to stretch into the twenty-first century.

It is interesting to observe in passing that we have in some colleges a group of courses which are commonly referred to as "vocational courses". In fact the courses in question are courses in industrial design and related areas and were recommended to be developed in the second Coldstream (The National Advisory Council for Art Education) Report in 1962. It may almost be thought that the existence of so-called "vocational courses", freely spoken about as such, implied that all other courses were somehow not vocational. It is curious how terminology begins to mean what we intend it to mean, rather than what the words literally convey. There are dangers in this practice of misuse of language.

If we address ourselves to the question of precisely what is "vocational" and what is not, in the generality of the situation we soon come up against a number of difficulties. Is Sociology or Economics vocational for an Engineering student? There may be two views on this. Some may say that it is not part of his vocational education, but belongs to his general or liberal education, while others may say that if it isn't part of his vocational education, it ought to be.

Is the teaching of GCE "A" level French a vocational study? Many would answer the question negatively, but for a prospective interpreter or a marketing expert, it may well be a highly vocational study.

And what is the position of "Art" at any level? In many cases it would be seen as a non-vocational activity, but would it not be highly vocational for the prospective professional painter or industrial designer?

These are problems to which easy answers are not available. The problems, if not the answers, have been neatly summarised by Charles Carter, the Vice Chancellor of Lancaster University, writing in 1964:-

> "Education remains a mysterious process; we are sure neither of how best to achieve results, nor of what results we want to achieve. Technical Education, though it may seem to have the simple function of providing the developed skills needed by society, must now in reality prepare people to develop skills which have not yet been imagined, required by technical or commercial processes not yet conceived; and it must do this in a way which has regard to the universal need of general education".

Let me then select from amongst the many issues which may now be discussed in more detail in relation to the future of vocational further education some of those which seem to me to be particularly relevant in the immediate future. I have with regret to jettison others about which I may personally hold strong views and I shall not have time to deal in any detail today with what Charles Carter called "the universal need of general education".

education and training

My first major theme concerns the dichotomy, potential or actual, between education and training, to which I have briefly referred in the context of the OED definitions of the words.

Many attenpts have been made to differentiate between training and education and not infrequently in the context of seeking to allocate costs between the private and public sectors. It used to be thought that the distinction between education and training was more easily made, the more advanced the level of education was. The argument was based on an implicit assumption that advanced education was necessarily highly theoretical, highly erudite, suitable for the few and generally incomprehensible for the many. That point of view carried weight until post-graduate and post-experience management education became more widely known in the period since 1945. It began to become more obvious at this level of education that the applicable skills thought to be acquired by training and the underlying concepts and ideas, perhaps the subject of education, were so inter-related that the distinction between the two activities became wholly meaningless.

Just however as we were moving into a period when these artificial distinctions were beginning to be seen as such at the more advanced levels, we took legislative action in 1964, in the shape of the Industrial Training Act, to make as sure as we possibly could that the training and education components of one and the same activity, ie. the development of human beings, were conceived, organised and administered in a separate manner. The Industrial Training Act, as we know, was sponsored by the Department of Employment and the Training Boards were made responsible to the Secretary of State in that Department. Many representations were made to the Department of Education and Science about its apparently subservient role, for which much evidence was quickly available and regrettably continued to become available over the years. The education service, as well as the Department of State responsible for national educational policy, were not considered to be central or even equal partners to employers and Trade Unions in the operation of industrial "training" and much of the subsequent disillusionment with the operation of the Act and the failure to expand educational opportunities for part-time education is in part a direct consequence of the legislative and administrative framework which was provided.

Curiously enough, however, certain actions which took place, above all first-year off-the-job training, became almost artificially integrated as a single operation and there are now those on the industrial side who are beginning to see this as the single activity in personal development, which it is.

the structure of awarding organisations

I have already referred to the substantial time lag between the 1961 White Paper on "Better Opportunities", the setting up of the Haslegrave Committee and the beginning of policies to overcome problems which have been with us for nearly twenty years. It would be well to develop matters of this kind and related issues a little further.

Recent pronouncements by members and officers of TEC have made it clear that TEC expects a small proportion of colleges and courses to commence to operate under its auspices in 1976. There is to be a progressive development year by year until, by 1982, most colleges and most technician programmes will be under TEC auspices. Even then, 7% or so of the 5,000 estimated technician programmes are scheduled to commence from 1982 onwards. Bearing in mind the manner in which TEC is approaching its task, such a time scale is not surprising and some would say inevitable.

No corresponding time scale is available at this time for the operation of BEC, but it is of course known that it came into existence about a year after TEC and that its initial policy statement is yet to be published and discussed.

In the background there hovers the Gann Report on Design Courses, to take the place of the so-called "vocational courses" in Design. Some of our colleagues with particular interest in the Art and Design field hope, I know, that a Design Education Council or something of that kind may be established to work in parallel with BEC, TEC and to complete the triumvirate by establishing DEC.

The vocational FE sector however, provides courses for a good many other types of students, namely operative, craftsmen and for vocations which are not at all easily classified into any of these standard groups.

Traditionally, the City and Guilds of London Institute has been the examining and awarding body for operatives and craftsmen when they have completed a course of education, or should I say of education and training. In parallel with the City and Guilds, of course, we have had, and still have, regional examining bodies such as the UEI, the ULCI and others, who are coordinated through a Council of Technical Examining Bodies in order to prevent local competition for the examinations of the City and Guilds and regional bodies.

There is within what I would call the vocational area of operation of further education colleges another large field not covered by any of the foregoing, namely the field of General Certificate of Education courses, of Ordinary National Diploma courses - or are the latter to become established as technician courses and fall under the aegis of TEC and BEC, a matter which seems far from certain at the moment - secretarial courses, pre-nursing courses, nursery nurses' courses, homecraft and family care courses and doubtless many others. It seems unlikely that all these courses will come under TEC or BEC. Certainly GCE courses will not and certainly the now highly probable CEE development will not either.

The common factor amongst this category of courses, for which a new home in terms of an awarding body does not so far appear to have been established, seems to be that they are provided for the most part for young persons in the age range 16-19 years and that some of them are provided in parallel with similar provision in the secondary education sector.

There could be an argument as to whether all the courses I have mentioned are vocational or not. I would reject the argument that GCE courses are generally speaking not vocational, since a proportion of the subjects and a large element of motivation in the students is certainly vocational, just as it is and always has been in relation to most degree courses, even in apparently general subjects. I consider a course to be vocational, even if a particular career commitment does not exist, but the wish for an educational base to provide a vocational springboard is in evidence or provides the real driving force.

If TEC establishes, as must now be presumed will happen, a system whereby in effect, the colleges offering technician courses will operate along lines analogous to Universities and Polytechnics in respect of degree awards, a totally new situation may develop. We may then be faced with a large number of colleges in effect teaching students on courses which they have designed, with or without TEC standard units; in which they will certainly examine their own students and in respect of which, after an initial validation exercise, seemingly very much on CNAA lines, they will be in effect responsible for the award of the qualification. It remains to be seen whether BEC will follow

this pattern, but whether it wishes to or not, it may by now have very great difficulty in doing the job differently from TEC. If this happens, is it really to be expected that the teachers, the Academic Boards, the college administrators and the LEAs behind them will continue to accept the situation in regard to operative and craft courses and in regard to the other provisions at 16 to 19 which I have mentioned, in which innovation in curriculum, assessment method and responsibility for awards is kept to a minimum, made as difficult as possible and preferably not to be attempted? Is it not more likely that there will be a ground swell, that what can be done for the relatively more advanced technician courses and qualifications can surely be done for the more elementary and simpler operative, craft and other courses and qualifications?

If so, do we then proceed to set up a Technical Craft Council, a Business Craft Council, corresponding operative organisations, or do we fundamentally attempt to revise the approach and structure of the City and Guilds of London Institute and the regaional examination unions?

And where do we then stand in relation to GCE and perhaps CEE awards, which are assuming a growing importance in the vocational FE sector, where our operations are in parallel to the schools? Do we then take the line that what is good for the schools must remain good for us, or do we try to modernise the system which is operating in schools for GCE, although the experience of school teachers who have been involved in curriculum development and examining work, which became possible with the institution of the CSE and indeed is increasingly possible with a number of GCE boards, does not inspire one with a great deal of confidence that enthusiasm in the secondary sector would support such a development.

All these thoughts seem to me to lead to the inevitable conclusion that some of the current and likely future developments, while representing steps forward in certain respects, are likely to create a fragmentation of the system beyond anything any of us have experienced during our lifetime. There seem to be strong arguments for the establishment of a Further Education Council to provide a framework of policy and coordination for the further education sector as a whole, by way of advice to the Secretary of State or other bodies; to engage in the development and keeping up to date of a structure of further education courses, organisations, awards, research, curriculum development and staff training which will leave the maximum amount of freedom to those in the field charged with the duty of teaching and creating learning opportunities for students, but in showing that the system stops growing like Topsy and develops with a degree of cohesion and logic which the current need for economy and cost-effectiveness, to put it at its lowest denominator, demands. The time is particularly propitious for such a development in view of the new reduced rate of growth, if any, which has been forced upon us by the economic problems of the country.

I want to stress that my concept of a Further Education Council is not an organisation which would itself control colleges or issue executive edicts, and certainly not a financing body like the UGC. Rather do I see it as an ideas clearing house, a think-tank if you like, for vocational and non-vocational education in the further education sector, the power of which would rest upon its ability to convince widely, but which would have an assurance from the Secretary of State that, in terms of structural, organisational and national development, its advice would be very seriously listened to indeed by the Government of the day. It seems to me that it is the TECs and BECs and DECs and potential Craft Council and the City and Guilds and the manifold other bodies we can all think of whose policies and modus operandi need to become inter-related and consistent.

An alternative approach, which is worth thinking about, but which seems rather more futuristic, would be the setting up of a 16-19 National Council on a permanent basis, to bring together all interests concerned with this age group, the one age group about which Mrs Thatcher's 1972 White Paper had nothing to say. If such an organisation could be created, it would bring together all the experience and wisdom from the secondary as well as the further education sector and would involve the surrender by the Schools Council of its interest in the 16-19 year age range. For that reason alone, I see it as futuristic. Equally of course, if such an organisation did come into existence, it would have to be accepted, and I for my part would accept it willingly, that the secondary sector would thereby begin to have a stake in the development of full-time and part-time vocational courses for students in the FE sector, in so far as such courses are designed normally for students of 16 to 19 years of age. I know that most FE teachers would be happy to have some influence alongside secondary teachers in the education of the 16 to 19 year age group, of which a growing proportion is in the FE colleges, but I am not at all sure that all FE teachers would be equally keen to have the influence and wisdom of their secondary colleagues brought to bear on what is currently their own preserve in OND, Secretarial and other areas in the FE sector. For my part, I would feel that only good could come from using the expertise and professionalism of all concerned for the benefit of all courses and students.

curriculum development, methods of assessment and self-validation of awards

The published statements by TEC and recent speeches and writings by its members and Chief Officer (eg. Hanrott in THES of 31.1.75) have made it clear beyond all doubt that the Technicial Education Council intends to provide opportunities for over 500 FE colleges operating in the technician field to have the kind of opportunities which Polytechnics and colleges operating in the degree field were offered by the Council for National Academic Awards. It is clear that a massive curriculum development exercise is intended to go on in five hundred colleges and that, indeed, a good deal of this work has already commenced in a somewhat competitive manner because of fears that some colleges will jump the gun; be ready to start their technician courses before their neighbours; and hence be ready to start their higher technician or diploma courses and be the first in the field to collect the prized RSI approvals via form 21FE!

It seems to me worth raising the question, albeit perhaps a little belatedly, whether the intended development is fundamentally one of conceiving an intellectual approach substantially along University/CNAA lines, in terms of curricula, syllabuses and assessment methods. Is it correct to assume, as is evidently being done, that the recipe for high standards and success in higher education is necessarily the invariable recipe for such success in vocational technician courses? Or are we in danger in technician, and conceivably later in craft courses, of imitating the practices of prestigious institutions, devised for purposes and for the use of teachers and students for whom they have developed over long periods of time and are not self-evidently equally suitable for other types of courses in other institutions?

Has anybody really given fundamental thought to the question whether there is sufficient content "to develop" curricula and syllabuses at this level of learning and examining, or do we really mean when we talk about development that this concerns classroom, and perhaps postal, methodology, visual aids, schemes of work etc?

Is it not perhaps likely when all the time has been spent, all the talk is done and all the mountains of paper have been produced that the structure and content of the new technician courses will be relatively little different from many of the courses which are currently being offered? Alternatively, if the courses were to be radically different in the future, by what mechanism is it to be established that these radically new courses will in effect be "better" by any rational standard of judgement than those which they are superseding?

The matter goes deeper than that. I understand that the advice of TEC is to the effect that prior to the detailed curriculum and syllabus development work, colleges should engage in a joint exercise with industry to identify technician occupations, technician roles and hence the needs of technicians for education and training. I must confess that I thought much of this work had been done by Training Boards during the past decade. Apparently not, or if it has it must have been so badly done that it now needs to be done again. But are competent technician teachers, with their own personal practical experience, necessarily competent to carry out the kind of investigation in industry, and not only in that sector of industry of which they have personal experience, which would enable them to make the judgements which would need to be made if such exercises are to carry any long term credibility? It is more than the University and Polytechnics have achieved for technologist education. These are difficult matters and require training to a high level of discrimination in investigatory, sociological and psychological fields.

I think such questions need asking, because I am jealous of the waste of human effort and apprehensive about the disillusionment which will follow, when window-dressing is discovered to be a facade and the king is after all seen riding naked through the streets.

compulsory part-time education for 16-18 age group

It seems reasonably clear that there remains an important unresolved problem concerning the education of young people for two or three years beyond the compulsory full-time school leaving age.

In spite of committees, reports, encouragements and cajoling, the number of students in part-time education is declining, the proportion of the age group in part-time education is declining slightly and the proportion of all young people in this age group receiving any form of education is still under 50%, while the proportion of girls receiving any education between 16 and 18 is still less than one in ten.

It must be admitted that this is one of the more difficult and intractable problems, which recent developments have made more rather than less difficult. I need hardly remind you that the 1944 Act contained provision for County Colleges which, had it been implemented, would of course have obviated the problem which faces us today; whether it would have resolved the substance of the problems is another matter.

The Haslegrave Report of 1969 contained the following as part of its recommendations:-

> "The Secretary of State for Education and Science should therefore consider..... a measure to confer on every technician and comparable trainee a right to appropriate release to follow a course of further education associated with the training for his occupation".

It is impossible to consider this problem today without taking into account the experience of the last eighteen months or so, since the school leaving age was raised from fifteen to sixteen. Part of the teaching profession and a vociferous proportion of the population are seeking to provide means whereby the legal requirement of full-time education up to sixteen can be waived or circumvented in one way or another. Whatever may be the merits of their case, the initiation of compulsory attendance at part-time classes between 16 and 18 does not now appear to find an early place within the "Art of the possible". Ethel Venables has put it well in her book "Apprentices out of their time" in 1974:-

> "In planning for this large average group, one thing is quite clear: we might make a four day week compulsory for the 16 - 18 year old employees and compel them to attend a centre on the fifth day, but we could <u>not</u> compel them to participate in any of our schemes".

That surely must be the answer to all those who seek compulsory part-time education at the present time, compulsory that is by statute as distinct, and I would want to make this distinction, from being a condition of employment of particular employers.

The Haslegrave Committee, as quoted a few moments ago, of course did not advocate compulsory day-release, but did advocate conferring a right to day-release on every employee. To quote Ethel Venables again:-

"how an employee would assert such right against a reluctant employer is not discussed",

in the Haslegrave Report.

For my part, I should like to be able to discover a structure which would bring a degree of obligation, not to say compulsion, for part-time education between 16 and 18, but all rational consideration has eluded my attempts to devise a mechanism which would overcome the enormous objections to any degree of compulsion at this level. Nor is it sufficient to say that in certain other countries such systems have been in operation for the past fifty years. It could well be that had something of this kind been established in this country fifty years ago, it might today be socially acceptable and working well. The fact however is that it is not in operation, is not working and is, in my opinion, socially unacceptable at the present time.

There are of course immense other problems. Haslegrave's recommendation relates to technicians. Could one however distinguish between technicians and comparable trainees and other young employees? It is surely arguable that amongst the other groups of employees, for example relatively unskilled shop assistants, the need for an extension of general education in terms of literacy and a capacity to enjoy recreational activities is greater than the corresponding need among those capable of operating as technicians.

And yet again, if we really mean compulsory part-time education at sixteen plus for all, how do we persuade ourselves and the public, who will have to pay, that this will produce worthwhile results when viewed relative to the lack of conviction about the raising of the school leaving age, the none too contented society and the lack of economic growth and stability which had been expected to stem from investment in higher education?

the structure of a teaching/learning programme

During the past decade or so, stress has moved from a highly structured classroom situation with much emphasis on chalk and talk, to a much more flexible situation in which growing emphasis is being placed in creating a learning situation. Greater importance is attached to the learning of concepts and the understanding of subjects rather than the learning by rote or otherwise of a good deal of information and of facts.

We need to beware that the pendulum should not swing too far. I submit that there is, and always will be, an important, perhaps the most important, place for a good teacher who is able by word of mouth and on the basis of the interaction of personalities, to explain the difficult. We need to secure, when our resource learning centres are as well organised as we know how, that due weight is given to the more traditional classroom situation and the eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation between tutor and learner which no learning materials will ever replace effectively.

Having said this, I am bound to call into question the wholly artificial allocation of time in many cases, for what have become traditional patterns of course development and organisation in many disciplines and subjects. I suggest that in the light of the development of learning resources and the greater emphasis on conceptual understanding of subjects, it is now important to review fundamentally the time allocation for formal teaching in each programme which our colleges offer. No longer is it adequate to work on the presumption that a full-time student is available for X hours per week and that if his course comprises six different activities then one-sixth of X shall be the programmed time devoted to each activity, subject to a little bit of adjustment at the margin, depending on the strength and power of particular specialist factions within the college who are successfully able to twist the arm of others who are less powerful. I suggest that what is needed above all, in relation to the evolution of satisfactory programmes of study, is a fundamental review of the time allocated for formal teaching as well as for informal learning activities in respect of four separate aspects of our activities. These four aspects are the course, the subject, the week and the year. Clearly, the four aspects are not independent of each other, but they do require their separate consideration before being moulded into a unity which becomes a programme of study for a given student.

I raise the question as to whether it would be educationally sound and in practice possible to operate "open" tutorials, during which one teacher, or perhaps a small team of teachers, would be available on demand by students for individual or small group discussions, covering a range of subjects and levels or work. In other words, I am not here talking about a timetabled tutorial or seminar being an integral part of a structured course, but rather the possibility of setting aside a period of time, during which one or more teachers would be available on demand in respect of subject matter which they could not anticipate very specifically in advance. One would not necessarily expect a Mathematics teacher to answer questions relating to French, but, subject to some common sense limit on the level of work, would it really be so outrageous to expect a science teacher to be able to cope with queries in Mathematics, History and Geography? The possibility of doing this runs counter to a feeling amongst teachers today that increased specialism is the all-important aspect of our work and that the Jack-of-all trades is something to be deplored at all costs. I do not share this view, though I recognise of course that there are practical limits in relation to levels of work. I remind you that it has long been one of the corner-stones of the Cambridge tutorial system that a college tutor at undergraduate level, at any rate up to Part I, is able to cover the whole range of subjects which a student is studying.

I also raise the question as to a much more developed and systematic postal guidance operation for older students or for students on shift work who cannot attend classes at conventional times, or indeed who have physical access problems to our colleges because of transport difficulties in rural areas. I am aware that individual experiments of this kind have been carried out, but

they do not appear to have spread and little appears to have been spoken or published about them. Can we spread the influence and opportunity for vocational education by some such means or perhaps others?

I am exceedingly conscious about the degree of selectivity which I have had to employ in addressing myself to a subject which is of immense potential width and importance. I hope that the areas which I have selected for particular attention will be ones which you also will feel to be important at this time. You may feel that others have greater importance; if so, perhaps we can exchange views during the ensuing dicussion period."

Discussion Arising

economic situation

Sir Alan was first asked what effect he thought the current financial climate would have upon FE. He replied that it was difficult to generalise because the situation was different in different parts of the country. Clearly, there was a psychological effect. One of his main problems was to prevent staff morale sinking too low, for this ran counter to development. Nevertheless, the FE system could almost certainly be made more efficient. It was likely that all the classes contact hours provided were not necessary, and that savings could be made without any harm and perhaps with positive good resulting. It was difficult, because many colleges already had sufficient staff to provide a high number of class contact hours to students, but this was no reason for not trying.

college size

Commenting on the best size for colleges, Sir Alan said he felt there was a general revulsion against the very large institution, that we had recognised that size did not necessarily improve quality and that quality was in fact more likely to be achieved in the smaller college, if only because there was a flatter pyramid of authority.

TEC

A participant expressed the view that TEC seemed to have a naive expectation that curriculum development would would march hand in hand with industrial training. Would this really happen through goodwill, or would it have to be forced, so that only those people who undertook properly organised, and properly credited training schemes would be allowed to do TEC courses?

Following this, Sir Alan remarked that while he was in favour of the unification of the award system for technician level courses, we ought perhaps to ask whether all the energy which was being devoted to curriculum development was really necessary. Would the result be very much more worthwhile or even very different from what existed at present? The Chief Officer of TEC had indicated that his Council was going to provide 500 FE institutions with the curriculum development opportunities that the CNAA had given the universities. Sir Alan was not convinced that teachers in FE colleges really wanted these opportunities, or that it was at all readily possible to examine students' needs and devise a curriculum to suit.

A member commented that at the London College of Furniture this had been done two years ago, and although problems had occurred, it had been a worthwhile exercise. Sir Alan replied that this could have been due to the fact that it was a highly specialised college. The bulk of technicians courses were, however, duplicated in colleges throughout the country. He questioned whether benefits would accrue on a scale related to the number of teachers and the potential investment of time involved. This was a particularly important issue at the present time. Since the Haslegrave Report the financial climate had changed, and perhaps it was necessary to take longer over developing new curricula instead of each college rushing to be the first to get it courses approved.

Project A — To analyse the present situation in vocational further education and to identify trends.

Witness Session

To assist the syndicates in their discussion, Mr M O Bury, Director of Education, Training and Technology, Confederation of British Industry and Mr P J C Perry, Director of the British Association for Commercial and Industrial Education spent some time with the groups, answering questions on how they viewed the present situation relating to vocational FE.

"In one syndicate, for example, Mr Bury spoke, amongst other things, about the unsatisfactory situation in regard to 'day-release'. The costs of extending this beyond those areas in which it was conventionally provided would not make it any more welcome to employers and would probably conflict with other educational priorities. However, colleges should be considering how they might best handle a broader range of day-release students so that, when any developments did occur, they would be prepared."

Mr Perry spoke to one group of the TSA and its objectives. He said that a major problem in planning training schemes was the lack of reliable manpower forecasting. It was not only demographic trends which had an effect on training needs. Political decisions, such as whether Britain stayed in the Common Market, and economic factors, such as interest rates, had a huge effect and yet they were virtually unpredictable.

Syndicate Reports

definition — One syndicate attempted a definition of vocational FE. In view of the multiplicity of courses and types of institutions involved, they found this difficult, but reached a working definition of vocational FE: "all education and training over the age of 16 years".

students and courses — All syndicates agreed that there was a greater proportion of students going into disciplines other than engineering and technology than in the past. There was a particular increase in the number of students taking 'O' and 'A' level GCEs in colleges rather than in schools, despite discouragement from some schools and local education authorities. The problem of overlapping provision was particularly worrying in the present financial climate. As well as financial difficulties, one syndicate noted additional stresses due to politics and rapid change in industrial requirements. This group noted that the present salary structures in education had an unhealthy effect on people's attitudes to what was taught. For example, schools tried to keep their sixth forms large and colleges tried to concentrate on high level work, instead of concerning themselves with what was best for the students. This syndicate also commented on the fact that much of the success of the FE system in the past had been due to its flexibility - its facility for responding to changing needs. The increased speed of change now and in the future might make this more difficult.

manpower planning

On manpower planning one group commented that despite its unreliability, there should still be an effort made to try to see what is required in the national and local interest.

apprenticeships

This group also paid some attention to the more concentrated, shorter training schemes now being taken by apprentices. They said that these were often based on modular structures. Integrated schemes included the new CGLI 500 series which involves a new approach to craft training with a choice at advanced level of a range of supplementary studies, and the NETS (New Entrants Training Scheme) courses for craft apprentices which in the first year provide 16 weeks of apprentice training and 12 weeks of more general FE (although the two aspects are integrated) and a further 12 weeks in the second year.

One syndicate produced the chart which shows present demands in various areas and resultant responses. The main trends in response to current demands were identified as:

i) more full-time courses;
ii) modular courses;
iii) diversification in FE.

	DEMAND	RESPONSE
schools	1) ROSLA 2) Increased proportion of 16 plus students	1) linked/taster courses 2) more full-time courses, change in 'opportunity ladder' (diversion into full-time education), modular courses, TEC
industry	1) decline in engineering 2) wider career expectations 3) more flexible training needs	1) no response as yet 2) new courses, eg growth in business studies 3) more general basic courses, 'short burst' training, modular patterns
socio-economic	1) community needs (eg illiteracy) 2) more constraints from Government and LEAs 3) inflation	1) more remedial education 2) restriction of flexibility 3) financial constraints

Project B

To identify anticipated changes in vocational FE during the next five years and to draft a generalised scheme for college development relating to vocational education.

C T Ferguson,
Staff Tutor,
Coombe Lodge.

Introduction to the Project.

"In preparing this introduction, I read a considerable amount of literature on the recent history of further education, and can only conclude that it is something of a hotch-potch. The way FE has developed has been a conflict and a relationship between the various constraints which have put pressure upon education in the last 50 years, policy and educational objectives. In other words, educational objectives have not been the sole reason for developments which have taken place.

policy

Perhaps I might illustrate this by referring to the developments which occurred in the 1960s. The policy was to set up a ladder system for colleges. The Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs) began as technical colleges, were then designated CATs and switched over from the LEA-financed system to a direct grant system. Then they became technological universities, and finally, many of them have diversified and become universities catering for all types of courses. Thus colleges of technology could claw their way up the system and become universities.

When Tony Crosland became Secretary of State he changed the system, so that colleges of technology could no longer leave the public sector. This led to the creation of the binary system with polytechnics doing advanced level work but remaining in the public sector. Gerry Fowler has used a phrase which sums up the policy of that period, "disjointed incrementalism". In fact this concept of a disjointed growth resulting from changes being made because they are useful in the short run sums up the whole post-war development of FE. It is perturbing to think that this policy might still operate in the future. I believe that it is necessary to look at different systems on a macro scale rather than confine ourselves to the micro system of the college.

If we move away from a policy of disjointed incrementalism, what are we left with? We can develop a more controlled system; for instance one of positive discrimination, moving resources into parts of the system where they are most required, rather than the present ad hoc system. I should like, however, to concentrate now on developments which might take place over the next five years, rather than on long term policy developments.

External Systems

central agencies

Let us first look at possible developments in systems which are external to the college. These may be divided into central government and quasi-government agencies, eg. the DES, the SED and the Inspectorate, and Local Agencies. Will they take a more active part in the control of colleges? Many people believe that LEAs operate too tight and inflexible a control over FE. Would

it be better if FE were placed directly under DES control, through some sort of direct grant scheme, perhaps under a regional or area system? Scotland and to a lesser extent Norther Ireland have had regional control of education for some time. The reason LEAs control FE is a historical accident due to the fact that the school system began as a local system and the FE system was grafted onto it.

The Department of Employment seems to be taking an increasingly large role in the training or quasi-education of workers, and it appears that they carry out this function more economically than the FE system. They operate 48 weeks per year and pay staff on instructor scales which are lower than the scales for lecturers. Their students, however, fare better financially. Those on a TOPS course can get paid about £1,200 per year, which is approximately double the maximum grant for an ordinary FE student.

The DHSS also has an interest in vocational education with regard to health education and para-medical courses. Thus there are three Government agencies, at least, operating in the area of vocational education and training, all of whom have different policies. In future TEC and BEC will also be playing a part, and there might also be a similar Council concerned with design education.

What changes will be needed in the organisation of vocational education and training over the coming five years? Is there a need for some centralised consultative machinery to be set up? Should measures be taken to prevent falling student numbers, perhaps by introducing compulsory day release?

local agencies

Are the LEAs the best agencies to run a system which may in any case become organised on a regional basis, for example through the RAC mechanism, due to the need to rationalise courses? Should we take more account of the new Area Health Authorities in considering course provision? Was the setting up of Government Training Centres worthwhile, or could FE colleges have absorbed their work?

With regard to the needs of the employers of students, can and should the FE colleges try to take into account likely changes in technology over the next five years? Are large organisations, such as those in the aircraft industry and the iron and steel industry, going to find it more economical to set up their own colleges instead of using the FE system? If they do so, will it be detrimental to FE?

Should the FE system introduce a careers advisory service for school leavers? At present careers advice is given by school teachers, but perhaps FE with its wider experience of industry, could do the job better. Should more developments take place in linked courses?

Internal Systems

government & management

Are the present systems of college government effective? Should governors by given more authority? Is the system of academic boards, which allows a high degree of participation, the most effective system for FE? Should we continue with this present trend towards more and more democracy, or give more power

back to the Principal. In terms of human resources, do we use academic staff to the full, or do they spend too much time on committees? Do they need more support staff to prevent them spending their costly time on non-academic work? In terms of non-human resources, should FE introduce a 48 week, and perhaps a four term year to achieve better utilisation of buildings and equipment. Consideration might also be given as to whether curriculum development and changes in assessment procedures actually have much effect.

Future Models for FE

How might the college of FE develop in the future? The 'Community College' model might be adopted, as it has in Canada. Such colleges provide education of all types with the exception of school and university education, and virtually act as a bridge between school and university. Could vocational education fulfil this function and thus boost student numbers?

An alternative model for the future is that suggested by Ivan Illich in 'Deschooling Society'. He states that we have become conditioned to think of a college in a particular way, as a process which people enter, pass through and, by the end of the course, are in some way changed. But a college does not have to be this type of organisation. The college could instead be regarded as a resource centre for people to use according to their individual needs.

A third alternative is an approach based on educational technology. It is time we stopped thinking of this simply in terms of audio-visual aids grafted onto the existing system, but altered our approach to teaching, thus making optimum use of technological developments. Perhaps we shall in future think in terms of supplying cassettes and so on to students for self-directed learning, not even necessarily on the college premises.

Our attitude to the education/training dichotomy must have an effect on the college of FE in the future. Is training simply a matter of enabling someone to do a new job or perform his present job more effectively? Or is it an attempt to effect a change in his behavioural patterns? If it is the latter, when does it become 'education'? If the former, why is the FE college, as part of the education system, involved at all?

The FE system must consider its role in recurrent education in the future. There seem to be three terms for recurrent education: 'continuing education', 'education permanent' and 'lief-long education' and all have a slightly different emphasis, but together form a coherent whole. If this type of education is to grow, consideration must be given as to how people can undertake it without suffering loss of income".

Witness Session

As with the first project, members had the opportunity to speak with experts in particular fields. These witnesses were Professor J P Hudson, Director Long Ashton Research Station, University of Bristol, N Parker, Principal, Hertfordshire College of Building and R A Strand, Senior Assistant Registrar (Art and Design) Council for National Academic Awards.

Professor Hudson was questioned by one syndicate on the future training needs of people working in agriculture. He said that there would be a need for more training in future, as there would be a diminishing manpower and a consequent increase in the use of machinery and this would necessitate agricultural workers taking more training.

The same group questioned Professor Hudson on the mode of study which future agricultural courses would take. He explained the difficulty of young agricultural employees taking day release. Farms were often isolated and the distance they needed to travel to go to college was too great. Moreover, small concerns could not always spare their labour for a day a week. Often, they found it easier to attend block release residential courses. Full-time introductory courses were also popular among farming families who came to rely on their children's work once they had actually started.

Mr Strand spoke next to this group. Among the topics he covered were the fact that the artist was not, in reality, doomed to starve in a garret. Most art and design students who successfully completed courses did in fact get jobs in the field for which they had trained.

A discussion then took place on the meaning of the term 'vocational' in art and design. Mr Strand said that in a sense it was a meaningless term, for even at degree level most students hoped to find a job in the area in which they had studies. But it was difficult to find an alternative acceptable term for sub-degree level work.

Mr Strand was asked whether art and design courses would become broader at this level. He replied that although it was desirable for people to have a broad knowledge, at this level they were often employed as part of a team to contribute a particular skill. Therefore specialist courses were likely to continue to preponderate. However, art and design departments had much to offer students in other departments, such as building, who might take some art and design elements as part of a collaborative course.

Giving his personal opinion on the possibility of setting up a Design Education Council on the lines of TEC and BEC, Mr Strand said that he thought this would be a good thing. The National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design, set up 10 years ago, had been valuable in enabling the character and standard of art and design courses at degree level to develop and mature before the validating body merged with the CNAA. For the same reasons, lower level courses needed a similar monotechnic body initially, so as to avoid this area, with its special character and needs, being submerged too soon in a massive organisation such as TEC. Perhaps, like the NCDAD and the CNAA, they could amalgamate at some subsequent stage.

Mr Parker was asked by the same group to comment on, among other things, the effect of the cut-back in the length of apprenticeship. He replied that he thought it would be bad for both industry and the apprentices. Firstly, the new shortened apprenticeship under-estimated the need for job experience, and this cannot adequately be simulated in the colleges. Secondly, it did not give the better apprentices long enough to learn to do more advanced, high quality work.

In reply to a question on whether monotechnic colleges of building were too narrow, Mr Parker refuted this suggestion. His own college's courses were very broadly based and covered four areas: a commercial function; a design and development function, a production function and a services area (supportive of the other three, eg. legal studies, personnel management, computer studies etc.). He questioned that when the polytechnics were being developed, real alternatives were considered. In his view, the horizontal division of vocational courses in different institutions was a poor one. Institutions would benefit more from a vertical structure in vocational courses as both staff and students see themselves within a continuum from entry to the top.

Another area of particular interest to which Mr Parker referred was that of the unfair treatment of employed students who had to rely on the magnanimity of their employers for their release. The onus and cost should be removed from the employer and placed with central government, said Mr Parker.

Syndicate Reports

changes

Changes which will affect colleges over the next five years were listed:-

1) Instead of increasing annually, finance for FE would remain the same.
2) In view of the financial situation, standards would have to be guarded more closely than hitherto, otherwise they might fall.
3) The age distribution in colleges would become wider as more mature students attended for retraining and 'education permanent'.
4) There would be an increase in the total number of students because of such schemes as TOPS.
5) Fewer colleges would be needed. In a drive to rationalise FE colleges would combine.
6) Teaching methods will have to change because of the need to restrict spending. This will raise broad questions of educational philosophy: What is a student? What is a member of staff? Who is the teacher? Who is the learner?
7) The level of unemployment will vary geographically. There will be a chance therefore for colleges to absorb some of the unemployed. Counteracting this, firms may not release so many of their employees for training in colleges.
8) If Britain remains in the EEC there will be more foreign students and more English students taking courses in Europe.
9) In the drive to rationalise the use of resources, there will be increased regional autonomy and increased power of central authority. Therefore the manoeuverability of the individual college will be decreased.

10) Increased power of large undertakings.
11) Increased influence of the Open University in terms of students, methods and staff taking OU degrees themselves which will affect their own teaching methods and subject knowledge.
12) Increased level of professional training for FE staff according to grade and stature - including those at the top of the institutional hierarchy.
13) Growth in the use of educational technology.

colleges

Despite lack of resources, it was agreed that a lot would have to be done to change the FE college. Characteristics of the college in five years time were identified:-

1) Students would demand that courses were of increased relevance to them. Therefore there would have to be more curriculum development exercises and more awareness of the importance of setting learning objectives.
2) The college will become more of a focal point in the community. It would be a resource centre for all age groups and this would change the college ethos.
3) There will be a growth of 'outreach' work, hence colleges will not be so isolated from the rest of the community.
4) New organisational and teaching methods will develop, such as a 40 hour week, the use of instructors as well as lecturers, more use of modular schemes including special bridging modules for mature students who have been away from formal education for a period.
5) The relaxation of formal entry requirements to courses, particularly for mature students.
6) Learner-centred education.
7) Shorter training courses and perhaps more of them, if unemployment increases.
8) Harmonisation with schemes of vocational education in the EEC if Britain remains in the Community and increased provision for foreign and immigrant students.
9) Increased participation of women, both as students and teachers.
10) Common use of resources between colleges and departments.
11) This would cause a break-down of departmental boundaries and a growth of multi-disciplinary courses.
12) More part-time education for the unskilled and semi-skilled.
13) Increased use of continuous assessment, oral testing and multiple-choice tests.

plans

One syndicate produced a blueprint for the achievement of the college of five years hence. Attention would have to be paid to the following areas:-

1) Courses. These should be listed and common elements grouped together. This would reveal where larger lecture groups could be formed, allowing a corresponding increase in tutorials. There would be an increase in aided individual learning and in the use of audio-visual aids.

2) Use of Resources. Better use would have to be planned within the college and between college, schools and industry. There should be improved use of staff as resources within and between colleges, and an increase of college hours, day and weekly use throughout the year.
3) Effective Management Development.
4) Appropriate Organisational Restructuring.
5) Staff Development and redevelopment.
6) Review of Curriculum Development.
7) Economic Costing of Courses.

The syndicate produced a development plan for the next five years:-

Year 1. Review Communications. Set up curriculum development committees which are likely to lead to restructured organisation. Prepared centrally a resources schedule of internal and external resources, including accommodation, library, staff and equipment. Begin a management development process. Finally, review progress and revise the plan.

Year 2. Submit first schemes to the Regional Advisory Council and Regional Staff Inspectorate. Submit finance proposals. Establish and improve working relations with schools, other colleges, industry and skill centres. Gain, say, 5% improvement in resource utilisation. Begin staff development schemes to meet the requirements of the restructured organisation and the new courses. Again, review progress and revise the plan.

Years 3,4,5 and on. Continue staff development and management development processes. Continually review and progress.

Comments on Syndicate Reports

Mr B Hallet and Mr Tovell, Vice-Principal of Loughton, formed a panel to comment on the findings of the syndicates.

On the question of colleges tending to concentrate on high level work, Mr Tovell thought that the Houghton salary recommendations seemed to indicate that there was a need to look after lower grade work, and the pressures to grasp high level work might now disappear. He thought low level courses, such as pre-TOPS courses in verbal communication and numeracy would grow. He agreed that there must be improved usage made of buildings, throughout the extension of the college year.

Mr Hallett spoke of the need to fight for resources for education. As a country, Britain was no longer the best educated in the world. It was necessary to prove that it was vital to allocate money to education. If no extra money was available, then education would have to be made more efficient, for example by using Open University methods. Mr Tovell added that a knowledge of comparative education might help us indicate the extent of the problem in this country to those who hold the purse strings.

On the recommendation that 'instructors' be employed as well as lecturers, Mr Hallet commented that the ATTI might firmly resist this - they had only recently won their battle to abolish the post of Assistant Lecturer. As staff often resist change, because of fear, it was necessary to aquaint them with the possibility of change before it happened, so that they would feel able to cope.

Turning to the issue of the college's clients, Mr Tovell spoke of the need to talk to potential customers in an informed way. He acknowledged that this would take up considerable staff time, and urged that a percentage of hours for this activity should be built into the college establishment. He warned that although TOPS schemes and the blandishements of the TSA were hard to refuse because they generated funds, there was a danger that in running a high proportion of these courses the colleges might be in effect changing their employers.

Finally, Mr Hallett commented on the fact that colleges were now having to fight harder for funds than they had done in the 1960s. This was either due to society realising that other things were more important than education, or simply a disenchantment with it. He suspected that the real cause was disenchantment - a feeling that courses were not really relevant to the clients' needs, particularly those of industry. Perhaps colleges spent too much time on actual teaching, because it was rewarding for the staff. It might be necessary to concentrate instead on learner activities - and divert resources into libraries, tutorials, feedback sessions and so on. Mr Hallett suggested that academic boards should set up small groups to look at colleges as a whole. These people, taken away from their departments, would be able to take a broad view which was not possible for those entrenched in departmental problems.

Members

E W G Beech	Principal, South Fields College of Further Education, Leicester.
M S Burles	Senior Lecturer, Business Studies, Loughton College of Further Education, Essex.
Miss J Davidson	Assistant Secretary, Royal Society of Arts Examination Board, London.
J A W Davies	Assistant Education Officer, (Further Education), Salford.
F C Evans	Principal Lecturer, Building, Hackney College, ILEA.
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D Hood	Depute Principal, Dundee College of Commerce.
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R R James	Principal, The College of Technology, Letchworth, Herts.
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D R Pease	Deputy Head of Department of Engineering and Science, Loughton College of Further Education, Essex.
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J Sams	Lecturer, General Studies, School of Further Education, Jordanhill College of Education Glasgow.
Dr A Smith	Senior Man Tutor, Dudley College of Education,
J H Stanton	Vice Principal, Tottenham College of Technology, London Borough of Haringey.
G E Thompson	Senior Lecturer, Business Studies, Brighton Technical College, East Sussex.

Visiting Speakers and Witnesses

M O Bury	Director of Education Training & Technology, Confederation of British Industry.
Dr H W French	Former Senior Chief Inspector for FE, Department of Education and Science.
F Fidgeon	Deputy Chief Officer, Technician Education Council.
Professor J P Hudson, MBE	Director, Long Ashton Research Station, University of Bristol.
N Parker	Principal, Hertfordshire College of Building.
P J C Perry, OBE	Director, British Association for Commercial & Industrial Education.
Sir Alan Richmond	Principal, Strode College, Street.
R A Strand	Senior Assistant Registrar, (Art & Design), Council for National Academic Awards.

Course Tutors

R Aldridge	Principal, City & East London College.
A Albrecht	Staff Tutor, Coombe Lodge.
C T Ferguson	Staff Tutor, Coombe Lodge.
D C Spencer	Senior Staff Tutor, Coombe Lodge.

Other Participating Coombe Lodge Staff

C M Turner	Staff Tutor, Coombe Lodge.
J Latcham	Staff Tutor, Coombe Lodge.
G E Wheeler	Deputy Director and Director of Studies.

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Sir Alan Richmond,
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SOME PRESENT PROBLEMS IN THE FIELD OF NON-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

"I have taken the liberty of slightly modifying the title of my address, since I soon came to the conclusion that I was unlikely to meet an objective which provided for the discussion of the present problems, that is, all the present problems. I think that the most I can hope to do is to touch upon some of the present problems and hope that it may stimulate you to think of many more.

We all know, or think we know, what is meant by vocational education. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a "vocation" as a "sense of fitness for a career or occupation", while "education" is a "course of systematic instruction". We can accept "a course of systematic instruction", but to define "non-vocational" is far from easy. Being a negative term, it tells us what it is not and one could be tempted flippantly to say that it is that which does not make one fit for a career or occupation. No doubt some who have become exasperated from time to time with the antics of their committed colleagues may have been tempted to do just that. What we really mean is that aspect of education which is somehow complementary to systematic instruction leading directly to a sense of fitness for a career or occupation. As soon as one uses the term "complementary" one is of course embarking on a dangerous path.

Moreover, I at any rate do not believe that non-vocational education as I understand the term is really something which can be divorced from that education which makes us fit for a career or occupation. It is of the essence of my concept of non-vocational education that it is an integral part of an education whose oneness is to be proclaimed.

My purpose today is not to give a resumé of the Russell Report of Adult Education, nor yet to select those aspects of the Russell Report which are particularly dear to me. (In passing, I think it is a splendid Report; cogently argued, well supported by facts and intelligently presented in the best tradition of evolution in British education.) I merely want to observe that Adult Education in the manner in which it is dealt with in the Russell Report is one part and deals with one aspect of the much larger theme which is non-vocational education.

development of liberal studies

I turn to the consideration of certain matters related to what we in the further education sector call "liberal" or "general" studies. I think it would be reasonable to say that liberal studies in its present further education significance derives substantially from Ministry of Education Circular 323 of 1957, entitled "Liberal Education in Technical Colleges". This circular provided most of the impetus for the developments which now, some eighteen years later, are well established and some of which at least I want to question.

The National Council for Technological Awards, the Dip Tech. awarding body, insisted that all courses approved by it for the award of the Dip. Tech. would have an element of liberal studies and in practice this was usually seen as something in the region of 10%. During the early years of operation of the Council in the latter 1950s and early 1960s it did not seem too important just how this was done and it was true for visiting parties to colleges to devote much time to a discussion of liberal studies content and philosophy. The NCTA's motivation and philosophy had however been significantly influenced by Circular 323 and the views of certain of Her Majesty's Inspectors about it.

When the Council for National Academic Awards was set up by Royal Charter in the mid-1960s, it soon stated that "all courses must include studies which, by complementing or contrasting with the main subjects studies, will help to provide a balanced education". (CNAA statement no. 3, para. 5.8).

During most of my professional life and still at this time, the battle as to whether non-vocational studies should be complementary or contrasting has raged and doubtless will continue to rage. Certainly CNAA was unable to reach a meaningful consensus when a strong Working Party addressed itself to the problem in the latter part of the 1960s.

The problems of philosophy and definition go beyond the question of complementary or contrasting studies. CNAA itself had said that "it is often possible to bring out the fact that scientific method, in the sense of a critical and sceptical approach to enquiry and a readiness to test hypothesis, enters at many points into so-called Arts subjects and that equally, the spirit of speculative enquiry, the exercise of creative imagination and the capacity for value judgements, are important in the activities of the scientists and technologists". (CNAA statement no.3.). These words carry the implication in some minds that a liberal method and a liberal attitude to the main discipline are what is really required to provide a meaningful and relevant education.

The 1961 White Paper entitled "Better Opportunities in Technical Education" really caused the development by regulation of virtually compulsory liberal or general studies in all National Certificate and most City and Guilds courses. Sixty to ninety hours per week became a common formula in many courses. Most colleges complied, though one or two which did not looked like reactionary and uncultured members of the club, whose asocial activities might be tolerated for a while, but whose absence of judgement could be assumed to be profound.

Now that most of us have had a decade and a half of experience in operating, watching, organising, pandering to or resisting the use of resources by general studies departments or general studies staff in other departments, the time has surely come to ask some fundamental questions. The questions should be asked not so much in order to obtain a unique correct answer, but rather to establish a spectrum of answers and a theoretical basis upon which the spending of considerable resources can be justified in the future.

I would be interested for someone to carry out a substantial research project to make an assessment of the resources which are now being spent per annum in terms of expenditure and also in terms of equivalent full-time staff in the interests of so-called liberal or general education in FE colleges. A second or parallel investigation, much more difficult to carry out of course, should then concern itself with establishing the philosophies upon which the work is based and the effectiveness with which the intentions are realised, including a type of social survey amongst our students and, most importantly, amongst our former students.

In the present state of our knowledge, can we really say that we have a philosophy, that we have an objective or a series of objectives which drive us along the road to accomplish our general educational ideals? Can we really say what should be the organisational framework within which these objectives are most likely to be realised?

institutional aspects

I now turn to the more mundane issues of our institutional provision for what we currently call liberal studies and non-vocational education generally. Structures and organisations are not important in themselves, but they can be means to attaining ends more easily, or they can create situations in which ends become more difficult to attain and sometimes impossible. Many FE staff work in colleges where liberal or general studies departments or sections exist. What debates have they had concerning some of the questions which I have already asked? Have they evolved a policy for general education, for moral education, for making young people into better citizens and with more secure personalities, better able to face the general problems of life, apart from the particular vocational ones which they are doubtless teaching them efficiently?

I must say that, on the basis of my experience, I now have serious doubts as to whether the existence of liberal studies departments or liberal studies sections or groups or even individual staff who are known as liberal studies teachers in other departments do not represent anachronistic organisational devices which can positively get in the way of a sensible curriculum and philosophical development. My reasons are these.

Teachers of any subject and good teachers par excellence tend to have as part of their driving forces a legitimate ambition for career development and/or promotion. I think there is evidence, if perhaps not scientifically assembled evidence, to show that teachers of liberal studies and liberal studies departments are not seen by the majority of other staff of the college as being central to the purpose of the College. Hence the need for career opportunities for such staff in regard to more senior posts and the need for material resources with which to make the work more interesting and meaningful is not automatically conceded and sometimes actually resisted. To a degree, the liberal studies teachers have only themselves to blame, because they have swallowed the superficial parts of the policy hook, line and sinker and have failed to develop the philosophy relating to their work or, having

developed a philosophy, have failed to persuade their colleagues, their Academic Boards and their institutions that the policies are valid and important. How many times have individual Academic Boards had the subject of moral education or some aspect of the philosophy of our general educational commitment on their Agenda?

The situation just outlined tends to feed on itself by reducing the status of liberal studies to something which can be done during those hours which are not needed by the "main" subjects and which is tolerated because the rules or "they" say that it must be done. This is a situation in which good teachers will opt out, because they will become discouraged unless they have exceptionally strong personalities and a total commitment to the work they are doing. Such people are rare. I give as a practical example the case of a teacher of economics in a liberal studies department who was teaching economics to engineers and making quite a reasonable job of it. When in the same institution a vacancy occurred in the Economics Department to teach economics of a similar level to management students in a post-experience course, the man concerned applied for a sideways transfer to the advertised post, because he rightly saw his career opportunities in the liberal studies department as smaller than in the Economics Department. This seems to me a crazy situation, which points to the need for subject or discipline-based groups of staff, whether they are in departments or any other units, to undertake the work for which they are qualified in relation to their disciplines, including such work in general studies as may come their way. If such staff take the view that they do not wish to bother about the relative superficiality of non-vocational education, then we have the symptoms of a lack of policy, a lack of definition and perhaps inappropriate staff for which we can hardly blame the individual since he has been recruited into a situation in which the terms of reference of the institution have been inadequately defined.

moral education

A D C Peterson in "Liberal Education and the British Technologist" in 1966 wrote on the nature of liberal education:-

> "It should develop in a man his capacity for logical analysis, for moral judgement, for aesthetic enjoyment, for scientific investigation and for social intuition".

Is this a definition which we can accept, or do we think it is at one and the same time too all-embracing and too unclear from an operational point of view? Is the argument to distinguish between contrasting and complementary still a live one, or is it only of historical interest?

There are certain to be those who will argue that Peterson's reference to the need for men to have a capacity for logical analysis is something best developed by a study in depth of vocational subjects, while social intuition may conceivably be best taught by the hard experience of life rather than in a classroom. Scientific investigation is something which in many further education courses can perhaps be taught directly, so that we are left with Peterson's remaining specification, namely "moral judgement" and "aesthetic enjoyment".

My concern relates to what we mean, how we may tackle and whether we should tackle the development of our students in relation to moral judgements. In other words, I am concerned to say a few words about moral education.

I think it fair to say that moral education is something which has not been discussed significantly in our institutions or through our institutions at all. The literature on technical and other further and higher education in the public sector is not sprinkled liberally with articles and books on this or related subjects. I suspect that the first reaction of many of my colleagues and perhaps of some of the members of this conference will be to feel that moral education is something with which we are not concerned in further education. I want to question whether this is a feasible philosophy for the future.

Cardinal John Henry Newman wrote about the function of a University in 1852 that "if a practical end must be assigned to a University course, then I say it is training good members of society".

Note in passing Newman's use of the word "training" which shows that the dichotomy which we nowadays sometimes see between education and training is of relatively recent origin.

Sir Richard Livingstone more recently, in 1948, wrote "why does the University fail to achieve what Newman wished?... While there has been some thought about the organisation and administration of Universities, there has been very little about the education which they give". And again, "the most important task of education is to bring home to the student the greatest of all problems - the problem of living".

Both Newman and Livingstone are amongst the authorities on the philosophy of higher education in this country. Can we really afford, or even want, to continue to place ourselves outside that main stream of education which subscribes at least to the ideals anunciated by Livingstone. Times have changed since Newman and even since Livingstone wrote the words quoted. Today the further education sector is much more central in the educational system of the country than ever it was a hundred years ago and even thirty years ago.

I would say squarely to those who will dismiss Newman, Livingstone and others as theorising academics who could afford to spend time and resources on philosophy et al that times have indeed changed. If further and higher education in the public sector is to remain true to its imputed responsiveness to social needs and change, if we now claim to represent a fully relevant alternative to secondary schools for the 16 - 19s and an equal but different higher education sector to the Universities, then we must involve ourselves in the debate about styles of living, about care for our fellows and about a philosophy base for this and much else.

For these reasons I feel free to quote Newman and Livingstone. No longer is education the privilege of the few; no longer is higher education a casual pastime for the fewer. We must not be afraid to learn from the relevant philosophies or earlier ages whether they wrote in University terms of those days or not.

Moreover, in respect of the education of the 16-19 year age group, about which so much has been said and written in recent days and about which so much more needs to be said, it is clear that some 30% of all full-time students in that age group are now in FE colleges while, if part-time studies are counted, the percentage is very much greater. However successful or otherwise we may think individual secondary schools to be in regard to the achievement of moral education and the training of the pupils attending those schools in the problems of living, there can be little doubt that all good schools have some sort of philosophy and make some sort of attempt to make their pupils aware of some of these issues, in fact to make education, especially of the 15, 16 and 17 year olds, more relevant to the problems of living. I really do not think that the lip-service which is paid in many colleges to liberal or general studies matches up to the need or is based on a sound appreciation of a theoretical base which must be made available as a reference frame in order that performances can be seen relative to an object.

Some of us with particularly close and growing links between further education and the secondary sector are becoming uncomfortably aware that some of our colleagues in the schools are criticising not so much our lack of attainment in respect of moral education, but our apparent lack of philosophy and aim in such matters.

I wonder how many FE teachers will be aware in any detail of the School Council's moral education programmes, which was published in 1972 but about which a good deal has been written during the past eight years or so. Doubtless, there are many teachers in secondary schools and in sixth-form colleges who may also not know a great deal about these matters, but it is my impression that there is a good deal more ignorance in the FE sector and especially so amongst relatively senior people like Heads of Departments, Vice Principals and Principals. Perhaps you would like to ask yourselves the question concerning the number of occasions on which issues directly or indirectly related to moral education have featured on an Agenda of your Academic Board. One would have thought that however Articles of Government were written, this was an issue which fell squarely within the terms of reference of an Academic Board.

I do not think that we can really claim that we are doing all we should for the young people in our institutions, unless we have a positive philosophy concerning moral education and unless we try at least in the best way we can to implement some part of it.

"The concept of moral education means education for personal need". (Hilary Chapman, Humanist, volume 86, July 1971). Moral education in the sense in which I use the term and in the sense in which the Schools Council curriculum project was developed means any education which helps young people to adopt a considerate style of life. We tend at times to assume too readily that the young person who is bright academically will be rational in his personal life. When put in this manner it is obvious to most of us that the thesis is not valid, but how many of us in our institutions do anything deliberately and purposefully to anticipate the problems which our students will face as they grow up and develop?

In moral education, we have to try to move away from any conceptual approach which abstracts the rational and the intellectual and divorces them from the emotional lives of individuals. Rather do we need to develop relationships between staff and students in which opportunities for discussion can be found, so that the effect on other persons and on the young person himself may be discussed in as unemotional an atmosphere as may be possible.

It may appear that I am advocating a regilious approach to education in our colleges. I am not sure whether I am or not. I do know that I am not advocating religious education in any doctrinal or sectarian sense. If however one defines religion as Tolstoy did when he wrote:

> "true religion is a relation accordant with reason and knowledge, which man establishes with the infinite life surrounding him and which is such as binds his life to that infinity and guides his conduct",

then I am all in favour of our attempting to make progress towards some sort of education in religion.

I have of course in the context of the moral education concept to mention what is often referred to as education in and for personal relationships. I hope that what I have said hitherto has made it clear by implication that I could not conceivably divorce the concept of education in personal relationships from the broader and more fundamental concept of moral education. How many of our teachers are interested and skilled to work in the general field of education for personal relationships? Let me make it quite clear that this includes elements of sexual education, of boy-girl relationships, of contraception, drugs and all the other difficult issues which arise in adolescence and indeed in adult life in many cases. Do we acknowledge that subjects of this kind have an important part to play in the totality of the educational process, particularly but not exclusively in respect of those of our students in the 16 to 19 year age range? It will be clear that I answer the question in the affirmative, but I am primarily not so concerned about the nature of the answer, but rather with the asking of the question and with the giving of an answer of some kind instead of a sheltering behind the demands of vocational education as the be-all and end-all of our responsibilities to students and society.

the third culture

During the past twenty-five years or so, arguments about a balanced education have tended to lead into discussions about the complementary or contrasting needs of Arts and Science education. I need hardly remind you of C P Snow's reference to The Two Cultures, in 1964. I always found it slightly amusing as an erstwhile thermodynamics teacher to find colleagues discussing C P Snow's thesis most earnestly and with not a little conviction, only to find that the example C P Snow selected in order to demonstrate the relative ignorance of graduates in the Arts of fundamental truths in Science was the second law of thermodynamics. I have yet to find an Arts graduate who professes to be in sympathy with much of what Snow said who had the vaguest idea of what thermodynamics, let alone its second law, was all about.

I myself have experience in trying to ensure that students in the Social Sciences, and I use the term generically here, shall have an introduction to some of the mathematical concepts which lie at the heart of most modern thought. This was and is not a matter of teaching Mathematics to individuals who have little aptitude and even less interest. The experiment in question was highly successful provided, and this was an important and very large proviso, that the teachers undertaking the work were not only good teachers but were committed to doing this particular type of work in order to educate and broaden the understanding of these particular students.

We all of course have experience of trying to teach certain aspects of the Arts or Humanities to students in the Sciences and Technology and this is the aspect of the matter which has received very much more attention and which has so often become synomymous with the very concept of a broadening of education.

It is in this context that the arguments about complementary and contrasting have raged and I imagine are still raging in some institutions. Having devoted a lot of time and energy to some of these matters myself and having certainly been instrumental in devoting considerable resources of teaching time and materials to some of this work and in many cases successfully so, I now question whether this is the best direction in which to move.

I have always in any case had my personal doubts about the C P Snow thesis about Two Cultures. It seems almost too simple (I think simplistic is the modern word) and too superficial to be true and so I believe it has proved. The literature of thinkers over the generations is more extensive and more profound in relation to the core questions of life than the simple antithesis between Science and the Arts conveys. The third factor to which I believe attention needs now to be given very much more purposefully, is that which may somewhat briefly and perhaps superficially be referred to as the business of living, that which Sir Richard Livingstone referred to as:

> "the most important task of education is to bring home to the student the greatest of all problems - the problem of living - and to give him some guidance in it".

It is in this sense that I think a new form of illiteracy may be defined towards the end of the twentieth century and the need for a third culture established. Let us be clear that there are many students of the humanities, many so-called well-educated persons, whose understanding of the interaction of human beings on each other and on the environment around them is negligible, to put it politely. It is invidious to pick out subjects for special mention, but I think we can all think of graduates in the Arts and Humanities who are well-educated, while being terribly ignorant.

conclusion

I turn finally to one other aspect of the subject, which concerns breadth, depth and standards of work. It is assumed too readily, though often with justification, that non-vocational education is superficial and lacks depth. If it does, we should ask ourselves some searching questions. For one thing, breadth instead of depth may in itself not necessarily be a bad thing. More importantly, however, why should non-vocational education lack in depth? Is this because we see it as recreational, or is this because we see the teaching being carried out by second-grade staff whom we do not expect to promote and whose subjects and courses are thought not good enough for the main stream of vocational education?

It is true that there is a tendency in non-vocational education to flit about. I am reminded of a writing by Michel de Montaigne during the 16th century, who wrote "un peu de chaque chose et rien du tout". But is this an inevitable and intrinsic aspect of non-vocational education? I think not, though the present lack of a philosophical base may well tend to make it so.

There are of course large areas of work where the distinction between vocational and non-vocational education becomes quite meaningless. Here I want to make a particular plea for our colleges really to get to grips with the problem of community education in the broadest sense of the term. Irrespective of whether certain subjects for certain people are vocational or non-vocational, can we not try by meaningful classes to bridge gaps between the younger generation and their parents, especially in respect of some of the issues of personal relationships where the younger people might find it easier to talk and the older generation may have been brought up in a climate in which open discussion of such matters was less common. On a more mundane plane, can we not try and teach some of the parents of our students what modern mathematics and computing is about? Can we not try to do something about the generation gap, by letting Mum and Dad share in the facilities which are provided for their offspring, but which may have much to offer to the Mums and Dads as well?

And let us join forces with all the voluntary bodies, extra-mural departments and WEAs to do all the things which Sir Lionel Russell and his colleagues advocated, but to do them better and on a bigger scale than has yet been achieved.

I know that such a plea at this time will meet with some stony reactions in relation to resources, because of the current financial crisis. I am bound to say that my experience is very much to the effect that there exists within the apparently invoilate minimum provision which we believe we must give our students a good deal of opportunity for pruning and cutting out of dead wood, as a result of which resources in terms of staff, time and materials may become available for fresh deployment. It is really the theme of the whole of this address that there should reappraisal of the manner in which we set about our tasks, of what we mean by general or liberal studies, of our failures or successes of attempts in moral education, of the need to bring adults into our institutions and to develop an interwoven mixture of vocational and non-vocational education. In that way, we may perhaps use the current finaicial retrenchment as an opportunity to look at what we are doing in order to try and secure that the resources which are available will be used more effectively than may have sometimes been the case during a period of rapid expansion when the stress inevitable lay on new courses and the development of physical resources. The current retrenchment gives an opportunity for reflection, for the development of a more mature philosophy, out of which I would hope to see growing a slightly slimmer provision in terms of teaching time but a richer educational experience."

Discussion Arising

A participant commented that the main difficulty was not in having a sound philosophy base for liberal studies but its implementation, mainly because of the fact that there is no universal agreement on what constitutes a considerate style for living. Sir Alan replied that he did not think it was necessary for there to be precise agreement on what is meant by moral education nor what is a considerate style for living. The important thing was no to find a unique answer but to ask the question and achieve a spectrum of answers.

A physical scientist then described his own experience in running a course of science for non-scientists. He said that he had begun with the notion of giving the students some insight into the fascinating history of science and scientists, but had found that what they really wanted to know was what scientists had discovered about man and his relationships with the environment. Thus the course had entered the area of moral education. Sir Alan remarked that the reason this had occurred was probably not because he was a scientist, but because he was the sort of teacher who brought a relevant sensitivity to his relationship with the students which could form the basis of a meaningful dialogue.

Another member then spoke about the setting up of a general studies department at his college. It had been made up of teachers taken from other departments and it seemed that those people who were advocating most enthusiastically the introduction of specific courses in personal relations were individuals who themselves were emotionally out of place, if not morally bewildered.

Sir Alan said that this was quite a common phenomenon, but it did not necessarily make it wrong to provide such courses. The main problem was that if only the insecure members of staff were involved, there was a danger of a skewed approach resulting. Sir Alan's practical, operational answer was that balanced people who took a broader view should also be involved in these courses to exert a moderating influence and make sure that the course did not concentrate excessively on deviant behaviour.

Sir Alan was asked whether a particular stance should be taken on such issues as abortion and drugs? He replied that there was no unique solution. The staff student relationship and the ambience of the institution would have an effect. While it would be easy to say "never be dogmatic" this was too superficial - but, then again, it was not always wrong. There may be times when a teacher should say what he thinks about these issues, but he should also stress that he is putting forward his own personal views and that other people think differently.

On the question of the ambience of the institution as a whole, a member stressed that any moral standards which were expressed in non-vocational studies had to be complementary to those of the vocational courses and the general college ambience. Sir Alan agreed, commenting that in most colleges the centre of gravity lay on the vocational side; other activities were seen as 'fringe'. The way a college was organised and seen to be organised was vital. Often vocational courses, rather than emphasising particular moral standards, tried to be neutral, though the way they operated might imply certain standards. But more than this was needed - his plea was for an explicit commitment to moral education.

Finally, Sir Alan was asked whether he thought Schools Council humanities projects were suitable for use in FE colleges, or whether he saw a need to set up an FE Council to produce material of this type for colleges. He answered that he felt these projects were suitable for students in a particular age group whether they were at school or college. Although, for other reasons, he would recommend an FE Council, there was no point in having two bodies producing almost identical material.

C A Blackman,
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Garnett College.

THE FUTURE OF NON-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS AN ELEMENT WITHIN OTHERWISE VOCATIONAL COURSES

"In their aims for liberal studies courses CGLI include such objectives as sharpening curiosity, encouraging idependence of thought, developing linguistic skills and increasing understanding of individual and group behaviour. In a different format, these correspond with the aims TEC has put forward for all its programmes as set out in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 Aims of TEC Programmes

Every Programme should provide a continuation of a student's general education.
Every Programme should enable the student
- .....to think, to grasp ideas and to communicate effectively;
- .....to make decisions, to exercise initiative, to act as an effective member of a working group, and to supervise the work of others where this is required.
- .....to discover and understand the principles which underlie his specialisms and to relate them to other fields.
- .....to make an informed choice of occupation, and to progress to more advanced studies.

Every Programme should encourage adaptability, curiosity, self-confidence, independence of thought and the power to make critical judgements.
Every Programme must present an educational experience which will be satisfying to the student and contribute to his personal and social development.

All programmes must specify objectives which clearly reflect these criteria.

I shall consider three aspects of the development of general studies: content, teachers, and their teaching methods and assessment together. In all these areas, general studies teachers have had an agonising, if exciting past, an apparently gratifying present, and an obviously challenging future.

Content

Content is intended to be generously interpreted here, perhaps even to stretch halfway towards objectives. It is intended to cover not only facts, principles conceptual structures and the like, but also recognisable skills acquisitions, from the more easily evaluated, such as linguistic, to the more elusive, such as social. Thus the sense intended is: things to be taught, or, if another emphasis is preferred, things to be learned.

It seems to me that there have been five main forces influencing selection here;

1) The first has its roots in traditional assumptions about what is culturally worthwhile, or perhaps one should say, high-culturally worthwhile! Dover Wilson, writing in 1921, wanted young workers in the day-continuation schools to be engaged with literature. F R Leavis tended to confirm that literature was a good thing. Though we may seem nowadays to be more concerned with film and television the same high estimate of the value of imaginative experience is present. (Incidentally, a side-effect of the transference of out high cultural conscience to the audio-visual media could be a cause for concern, for while literature tended to promote literacy, the audio-visual media does not guarantee this.)

2) Of more recent origin is technological humanism. Broadly, this aims at a liberal education derived from a depth and breadth student of technology. Sir Eric Ashby, its most emphatic spokesman, claims that one specialist technology will suffice and offers brewing technology to support his argument. The influence of this selective force is obvious in many of the early CGLI syllabuses for English and Social Studies.

3) Arguably the most powerful force over the last 40 years has been the emphasis on the preparation of the student for an adult role in society. This has developed from assumptions about the desirability of dutiful citizenship to a clamorous concern for active reformist participation in as many social groups as possible. In subject terms, the progression has been from British Constitution and National Economics to Consumer Economics, Social Problems, Pollution and Community Action with Current Affairs as an ever-available topical injection.

4) The fourth force is a nagging and ever-present concern for the primacy of literacy, whether it is called English Language or Communications. The last 50 years are littered with principles-become-slogans that evidence a five-yearly resurgence of conscience about apparently static, perhaps even declining standards of attainment.

5) A force which is really only just gathering momentum and which suffers from serious misinterpretations in spite of the clarity of its exposition in the CGLI pamphlet on General Studies could be called the 'modes of understanding' approach. It might be regarded as a modern version of the traditional Liberal Arts rationale. The theory in which it is rooted is that man has constantly been trying to discover more about his environment and himself and to interpret his experience, and that he had developed particular ways of doing this. These particular methods involve familiarity with some key conceptual relationships. They have their own modes of enquiry, expression and evaluation. In the past they have been known as disciplines, although this appellation is now unpopular. They are continually developing, fusing and fissuring and sometimes atrophying. They frequently combine to bring several perspectives to bear upon the study of a particular thing or activity, such as education or technology, and these combinations sometimes develop their own mongrel distinctiveness.

In order to be fully educated, one must have access to all these modes of understanding and should preferably be able to discern the relationships between them. This is quite a tall order - one reason why this fifth force had not made much headway. Another reason is that it might spell a return to the sort of factual cramming characteristic of the old eight subject School Certificate. This misinterpretation is calamatous. Advocates of this 'modes of understanding' approach are, in fact, facing up to the reality of the knowledge explosion - the need to search out fundamentals ('principles' is the term TEC uses), the essential language of a mode of investigation or consideration; and the educational imperative of bringing people to the point where they can go on finding out, interpreting and applying for themselves. Perhaps it would be better to dub this force 'access'. Thus there are five forces which determine content: high culture, technological humanism, community need, language as a pre-requisite, and access to meaning. They are forces that have operated unevenly in different places and at different times; forces that have often created discordance, not only in staff rooms but also in students' minds. And yet,it is quite possible for concordance to exist between them.

With regard to TEC's views on content, their Education Committee in February 1975 approved a statement on the aims of General and Communication Studies which is now circulating to the Sector and Programme Committees for comments. Following these, the Education Committee may modify the original statement and will then send it to the Council for publication.

The provisional statement says that colleges should be encouraged to develop their own proposals. General and Communications Studies must be included in all programmes leading to TEC awards and should generally amount to at least 15% of the total programmes. In their schemes submitted for approval, colleges must include an outline plan of such studies, which may be provided in separate units or subjects, or may be associated with technical or vocational elements in the programme. They should include studies complementary to the main theme of the programme, such as related economics, industrial behaviour and historical developments. The studies should develop within the student:-

a) the ability to communicate effectively,

b) insight into the relationship between his technical studies and both his occupation and chosen industry,

c) better understanding of his environment and the wider community in which he lives,

and should encourage him to seek a continuous cultural development by associations both within and outside the college environment.

The Council's 1974 Policy Statement stresses that "Although the young student in employment may gain most of his social experience outside the college, such studies can help him to interpret that experience.

FIGURE 2

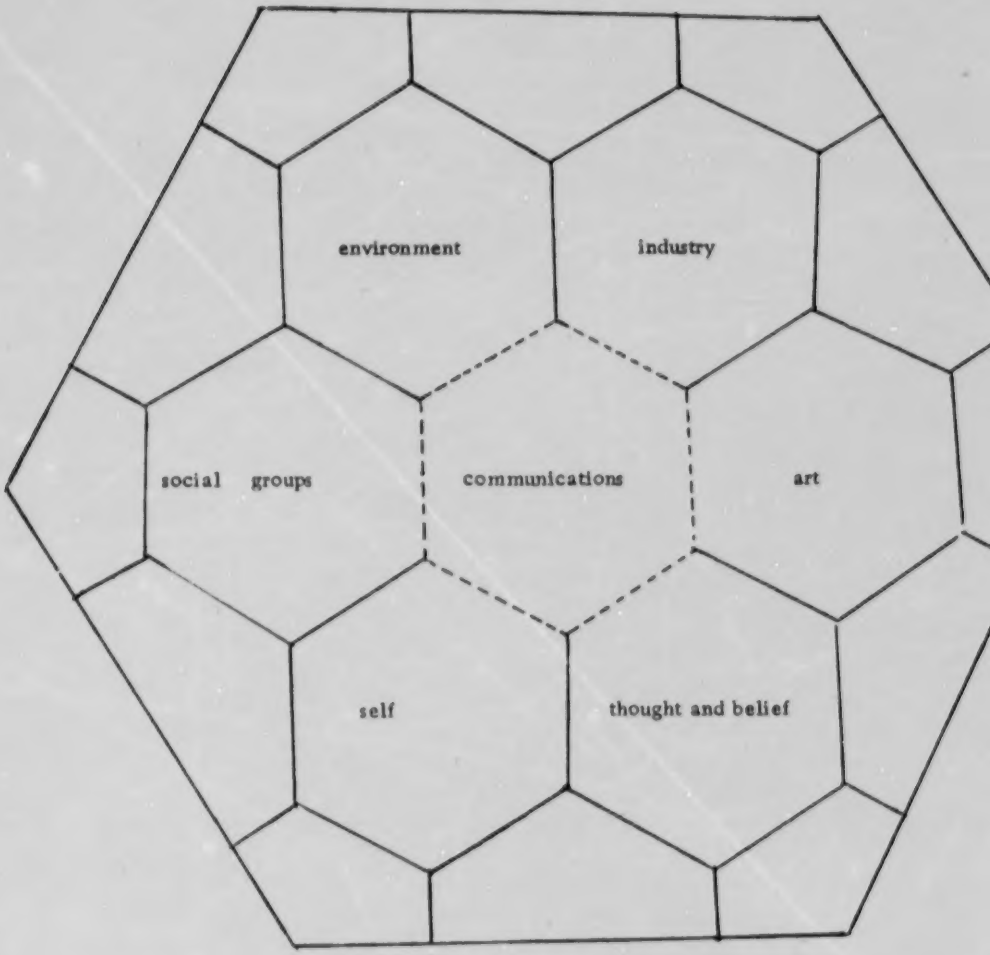

environment
industry
social groups
communications
art
self
thought and belief

FIGURE 3

COURSE DESIGN : THE MEDIA

Objectives	Themes
1. to transform a passive acceptance of the mass media into a sharp awareness of the way they operate.	The course starts by examining the nature of the mass media, their pervasiveness and power.
2. to increase knowledge of the workings of the media in particular their varied demands upon the attention and the imagination.	It considers five of the media in turn: print and picture; film; radio; records and cassettes; television. Finally it explores ways in which the individual can utilise the media instead of simply being their captive consumer.
3. to stimulate expression in various media, including those that seem to be the monopoly of the big organisation.	The emphasis throughout is upon searching scrutiny of the students' extensive media experiences, balanced by experiments in making media messages themselves.
4. to develop standards of criticism in relation to the products of the various media, to sharpen discrimination in their use, and to increase the capacity for enjoyment of good work.	Information is selected to develop some understanding of the economics of the media, their history and technical development, and their interaction with society.
5. to encourage the will to participate in media communication by comment, complaint - and contribution.	

Connections

The course provides a context for the students' future role as a media operator, and should help him realise the power and responsibility of the communications industry in which he is engaged.

"Construct"

The Association for Liberal Education's publication, "Construct" (which was published about a year after the OND in Technology (Engineering) Guide Syllabus appeared) was an attempt to meet conflicting demands. It attempted to make proposals that set standards, that colleges could adapt to suit their own students and resources, and that did not offend the cherished independence of the general studies teacher.

The scheme of 'Construct' seems to me to approach the type of programme which TEC is apparantly asking for. The mosaic pattern in Figure 2 demonstrates how communications studies are central and percolate into other areas of general studies and into other studies being undertaken for the OND in Technology. Each part of the mosaic has a course design which states the main long term objectives of the course, identifies the main themes and shows what connections there might be with the main course of study. A sample course design, shown in figure 3, is for a course on the media. (This is, in fact, abstracted from a development of the Construct approach now being used for the C & G Printing Production Workers' Certificate.) For each course a number of modules are designed. Figure 4 is an illustration of the modules devised for a course on Art. For each course there is a core module that contains some of the essential concepts which can be dealt with separately or within the context of the support modules. There is a notional allowance of 35 hours for each course, which the college may expand or contract. Naturally, not every module can be taught in depth within this time-limit. Colleges are able to concentrate entirely on a few modules, or even one, if they wish. It depends upon their human and physical resources and upon their students.

For each module, suggestions are given regarding content and communications work. The communications work lists activities through which the students' language abilities can be developed. Thus English is taught within the context of other work, as well as being dealt with separately in some areas.

The principles of curriculum design on which "Construct" is based are:-

1) The perspectives afforded by studies in these areas should be complementary to the vocational course (the emphasis being on contrasting rather than related studies).

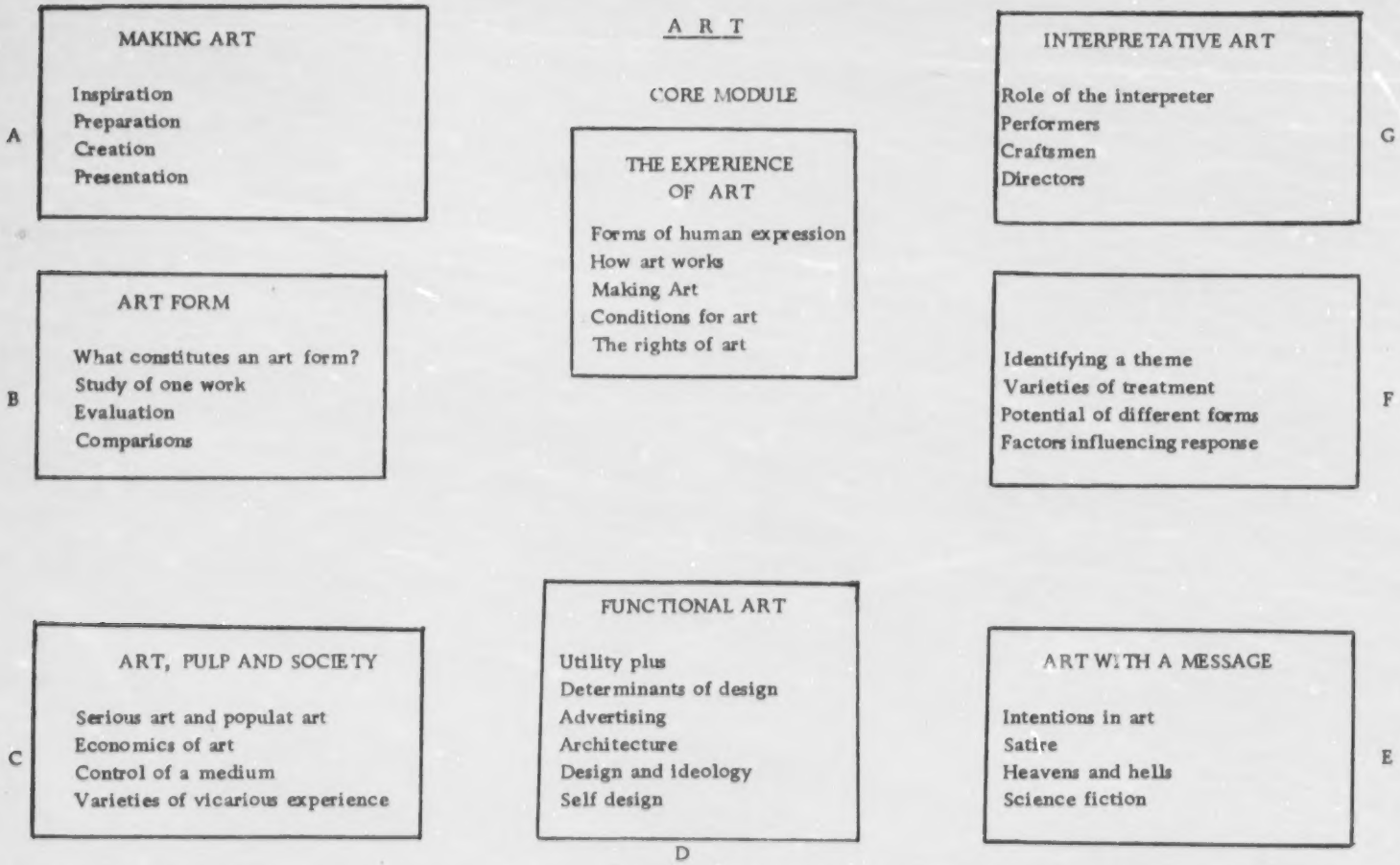
2) The material should be given a personal orientation, recognising the psychology of the student rather than the logic of the subject matter.

3) 'Key realisations' in relation to total knowledge should be stressed (cf. TEC's 'underlying principles').

4) There should be provision for lateral recognitions across the spectrum of studies.

5) Communications skills should be practical in content.

FIGURE 4


A R T
CORE MODULE
THE EXPERIENCE OF ART
Forms of human expression
How art works
Making Art
Conditions for art
The rights of art
A
MAKING ART
Inspiration
Preparation
Creation
Presentation
B
ART FORM
What constitutes an art form?
Study of one work
Evaluation
Comparisons
C
ART, PULP AND SOCIETY
Serious art and populat art
Economics of art
Control of a medium
Varieties of vicarious experience
D
FUNCTIONAL ART
Utility plus
Determinants of design
Advertising
Architecture
Design and ideology
Self design
E
ART WITH A MESSAGE
Intentions in art
Satire
Heavens and hells
Science fiction
F
Identifying a theme
Varieties of treatment
Potential of different forms
Factors influencing response
G
INTERPRETATIVE ART
Role of the interpreter
Performers
Craftsmen
Directors

279

Since "Construct" we have begun to develop another general studies scheme, this time for Printing Production Workers. Instead of having three categories of proposals, each module offers four: contact, investigation, information and expression. The contact points start from the student's existing experience. For example, a contact activity in the Print and Picture module is - "How much print on your person? Turn out your pockets!" After this beginning we do not immediately shower the student with information but involve him instead in some minor investigation. eg. "compare advertisements in a current colour supplement with those found in newspapers 20, 30 and 50 years ago. What are the main design developments?" Recognising that it is more economical for the teacher to present certain information than to have the students in a perpertual project posture, the third stage involves learning from the teacher. Finally, there are suggestions for 'working the material' which requires some individual or group expression from the students. We have not fled from the essay in some of our suggestions, although activities in other media are proposed, such as making a short local radio 'Whats On?' programme.

This, then, is our curriculum strategy. Essentially, the teacher is invited to massage the module, to pummel it, probe it, kead it, bend it, twist it, shake it all about - and sometimes to abandon it altogether and try some other approach.

teachers

General Studies teachers have one small characteristic that may just possibly inhibit practice. From the beginning, they have been thrust into an innovatory role, required to devise new approaches to teaching, new contours of content, rapid exploitations of new materials and hardware. Innovation is exciting, and what is more, novelty offers the promise of some glittering educational panacaea, a remedy for previous disatisfactions.

A second difficulty may possibly arise from the fact that there are so many different types of liberal studies teacher. One of the factors which affects the characteristic behaviour of these teachers, as well as their appearances, is the period in which they joined the ranks. They range from the citizen maker, the early authentic through the encyclopoedist, community activitist, sensitisor, communications competence facilitator, technological humaniser, ecologiser, sociologiser, improviser and media-man.

TEC states that teaching staff involved with its programmes should all co-operate in making each programme an integrated whole, encouraging good communication and a broadening of the student's education throughout. Given the range of staff involved in liberal studies teaching, this is quite a tall order!

This amalgam of concern may be expressed through the conduct of joint projects. The OND in Technology created the opportunity to do this, but did not specifically advocate it and it tended to be ignored. In "Construct" there are some suggestions which relate to what might be termed 'technologically humanistic' project work in which the communications expert, the complementary studies expert and the vocational studies expert can be jointly engaged in the devising, tutoring and assessment of the project.

A second type of project, the "college centred" project, may also achieve cooperation of staff across departmental boundaries. Students could investigate and report on such matters as communications problems, college accommodation, punctuality and college services. At the same time as being useful, such projects may also produce a commitment to college.

teaching methods and assessment

General studies teachers have certainly accumulated a vast range of methods. Our inventiveness in relation to the study of the mass media is alone a source of self congratulation! We began with a clean slate on which to work. First we found ways of bringing film into the college and now we can pirate television! In the meantime the British Film Institute weighed in with its extracts and study kits. It was not much trouble to persuade students to watch the films, but we also found ways of getting them to discuss the experience afterwards. Then we began to use cameras and soon after gave them to the students to use, finding that not only could they often express themselves better in this medium than any other but also that they could cross the mysterious divide of professional production and talk better about other people's films thereafter. Now students are manning CCTV studios and achieving an even more significant breakthrough by such familiarisation. I am not going to have the temerity to suggest that students learn or experience all that they conceivably could, even from the most generously endowed media studies course in the complementary studies curriculum. We cannot be sure, in spite of the remarkable end-products which sometimes emerge. But while we must recognise the weakness of our evaluation we need not denigrate the profusion of our method repertoire. Perhaps it was right that the energies of teachers should have been focussed on the development of method; if this had not come first, the evaluator would have had very little to assess - apart from for example the effectiveness of discussion on a feature film which the student may or may not have seen in the local cinema in his own time.

TEC's attitude to method is that

> "the learning methods will inevitably vary with the needs of the students in the group and with the staffing and other resources available"

However, we know full well that TEC is committed to the definition of objectives, and General and Communication Studies teachers will have to start exploring some different new territory. 'Talk, think, feel, do' may provide a thumbnail version of Bloom's "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives" but recognition of the comparable seriousness of the general studies contribution compels us to comparable communication about <u>what</u> abilities, and <u>what</u> developments particular learning situations are designed to promote.

We must now approach any learning situation with that nagging question throbbing in the mind, "What are the students <u>doing</u>?", and, later face up to the awful demand "What did they get out of it?". I would argue that we have the methodological resources to provide satisfactory answers to the first question: what we lack is the means to obtain assurance about our answers to the second.

The way ahead seems to me to lie in the types of activities provided in these Investigation and Expression columns previously considered, the incorporation within any period of a specific task, however humble, for the student to tackle. Industrial training has learned the lesson of operant conditioning more quickly than we have: achievement provides motivation. General Studies has provided students with so few opportunities for tangible achievement, whereas industrial training does this all the time. If we could incorporate such tasks, then we would certainly have something to evaluate, - the usefulness of the task not the least. Moreover, the sense of having done something, got somewhere, would give the student some return for the investment of his energy and time.

General studies teachers have generally fought shy of assessment, feeling that they needed freedom from examinations in order to conduct the experiments necessary for general studies really to contribute to a liberal education. The difficulty was that this made it difficult to conjure up motivation among students conditioned to expect certification for success. TEC now stresses that General and Communications Studies must be assessed. This does not mean a return to the straitjacket of end-of-year examinations. It is possible to develop a form of assessment, a student profile, which still permits individual variation and recognition of individual capabilities, and 'Construct' inevitably has proposed one!

developments

There have been at least three stages in the development of liberal studies in FE colleges. At the beginning, there was a striving for recognition, a fight to get teaching hours out of heads of departments. Then, as more teachers joined the pioneering few, came the development of the range of content, the variety of methods, the opportunities for other kinds of students contact, principally through the Students' Union. Expansion followed - a militant drive for departmental status, for exclusive use of custom-modified, if not custom-built, accommodation, for better materials, subsidies for residential courses, and, inevitably for the Department's own full-time and part-time students.

The fourth phase promises to be integration - close collaboration with vocational studies colleagues in such matters as the joint selection, supervision and assessment of student projects, joint course planning and timetabling. This integrated move should at least enable a college ethos to be developed - and the students to be given a better deal.

I sense that some General Studies teachers feel slightly dispirited about this situation. They feel suspect that the innovatory, venturesome spirit of the past may be anaesthetised on a plateau of respectability and acceptance. It sounds dull to plead for consolidation instead of experiment. But if we refer back to the aims for all TEC programmes set out in Figure 1, we can see then that if liberal studies teachers can join forces with their vocational colleagues, there will be innovation allright - hard, grafting innovation. Together, we must consolidate a revolution."

Discussion Arising

recognition of value of liberal studies

The first comment from the floor was that liberal education had not yet won the battle for recognition by vocational studies departments. Mr Blackman said that he derived consolation from two sources. Firstly, colleges appointing newly trained vocational studies teachers had generally found them to be more liberal and cooperative than others. Secondly, industrial trainers, especially in advanced training departments such as British Airways recognised the value of liberal studies to a much greater extent than many Heads of Departments in colleges of FE.

Next, a member expressed his frustration at the fact that liberal studies was often pushed into odd places in the timetable and had no parity with technical subjects. Mr Blackman thought that TEC's recent statement that general and communication studies should be fully integrated and occupy at least 15% of the course time, and that students would have to reach a satisfactory level of attainment, would do much to rectify this situation.

lower level work

Drawing attention to the fact that TEC, BEC and OND level courses had figured largely in Mr Blackman's talk, a participant asked whether the approach he advocated would be suitable for lower level work. He replied that it would. Although the emphasis on expression and activity in the 'Printing Production Workers' Certificate proposals seemed to suggest that a high level of literacy was required, he doubted whether, given the right teaching approach and the right materials, it would be beyond the capability of the less able student.

The alternative of a narrower curriculum could restrict the right of access of the 'less able'. He would prefer to put heavier demands on the imagination and ingenuity of teachers than promote yet another self-fulfilling prophecy.

E E Robinson,
Principal, The
Bradford College
of Art and
Technology.

THE FUTURE OF NON-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION : A PERSONAL VIEW

anacronistic concepts

"The terminology which is used to describe a subject area normally carries with it a framework of thinking which can cause those using it to pre-judge many issues, ie. once the terminology is accepted, many of the major decisions are already made. The term 'non-vocational education' embodies a negative concept which is immediately associated with vocational education. The assumption and mode of thinking which the terminology implies is something which we need to reject, for it is out of date. It derives from the old idea that public money should be spent on education beyond a certain level if it was 'useful' within particularly limiting interpretations of what is useful - interpretations which are not acceptable today. The evident difficulty that this conference is having in coming to terms with its topics may be largely due to the fact that they are expressed in terms which are anachronistic, within the context of current thinking about education.

need for synthesis

Statutorily "technical education" was abolished in the 1944 Education Act and "further education" came into being, a logical consequence of the thinking in that Act. The ultimate consequence of the 1944 Act in secondary education was the development of the comprehensive school, for it introduced the concept of secondary education for all. The ultimate consequence of the Act for further education is the synthesis of the traditions represented by the concepts of vocational and non-vocational education. This is in accordance with many trends in Britain and abroad - in renaming and reorganising colleges, in developing ideas of 'education permanent' and so on.

This trend is delayed in this country by conservatism and lack of perception in the colleges and among many of those who control colleges, notably LEAs, DES, professional institutions and examining bodies. Within the colleges, many staff regard their institutions as being mainly technical, although often the full-time students taking GCEs outnumber those taking National Certificate courses. Non-technical staff frequently regard themselves as having a peripheral role, and believe that the real work of college is in the technical fields, so it is not surprising that people outside the colleges accept this notion. Colleges of education have based their argument against amalgamating with colleges of FE on the assumption that the students in FE colleges are all metal-bashers. Recent trends have reinforced this false view of the FE college. Particularly regrettable, in my view, is the establishment of TEC and BEC which reinforce traditional ideas that the FE college is primarily concerned with technology and business. It would have been far preferable to establish a Further Education Council or a General Education Council. Fortunately TEC is proving better than we deserve, because its thinking on curriculum would tend to break through some of the traditional attitudes associated with the concept of vocational education.

I am frequently astonished by the failure of the colleges themselves to realise how much of their work falls outside the traditional vocational concept. Many of the courses are not vocational at all, and even the so-called vocational courses have departed from the traditional sense of the term vocational. Many of the most obviously vocational courses contain material that can in no sense be justified as useful to the student in his job and in many cases are little more than a ritual that has to be followed to get the ticket. Frequently, the general studies element in a "vocational" course is, in a sense, the most useful part of the course.

One vital factor in preventing us breaking away from this tradition is the package 'examination course' which characterises most vocational education ie. the courses that keeps one group of students in one class on one set of syllabuses for several years at the end of which they all take the same examinations which differ from those taken by other students on other courses. This type of course structure is limiting and in many ways anti-educational. It is even incompatible with the old concept of vocational education, for it is now common for students with quite different jobs to take the same course. I hope this type of course will be phased out and replaced by more open systems which give students more choice and freedom of movement. Students with different motivation and different objectives could share some classes and the distinction between vocational and non-vocational in terms of students, courses, departments, examinations and subjects would become blurred.

The concepts of vocational and non-vocational might be simple categorisations concerned not with content but motivation and objectives. Two students might attend the same class and for one the class is vocational- for the other it may be non-vocational. Some students attending a 'vocational' course may regard as a means of getting a qualification without intending to make direct use of it in their employment. Employers, too, may not always have the same motivations. While some will send their employees on day release to make them more effective in their jobs, others will do so because if they do not they will not be able to recruit young people, or to get money out of Training Boards, or, indeed, to keep people out.

One important consequence of the change I anticipate is that students not aiming for specific technical jobs would be admitted to technical classes (which the present categories and stereotypes effectively prevent in many colleges) if we re-examine our assumptions about vocational and non-vocational subjects.

In the synthesis of vocational and non-vocational education the vocational concerns will be further served by the abandonment of criteria of class, immediate utility in so far as these have been applied and the bureaucratic isolation of trades, professions and crafts in FE. The course structure has reinforced divisions that are in any case disfunctional within the occupational structure. Non-vocational concerns will be better served by a demand for purpose in study right across the board. The thinking which lies behind much vocational education has given purpose a bad name and encouraged non-vocational teachers to sometimes elevate purposelessness to a virtue.

16 - 18

Our priority for this synthesis should be in courses for the 16 - 18 age group. Segregation of vocational courses in this area is particularly iniquitous. The segregation is dominated by the demands of professional bodies, employers and trade unions in their own narrow interests and is incompatible with our responsibilities in loco parentis for these young people. Education for the 16 - 18 group should not be job-specific. It is incompatible with the continuation of universal education to 18 within the comprehensive ideal. How absurd it would be for us to implement universal day release so as so give girls freedom of educational choice within the non-vocational concept and deny it to boys in defence to the vocational concept! If the people who do not now receive day release are given it by compulsion, then those who already get it are entitled to the same type of provision. Many people now having day release get it on condition that they learn what the employer wishes them to learn. If employers are forced to send their young employees on day release that restriction on content is lifted. The 1944 Act's distinction between technical college and county college is as outdated now as that between grammar school and secondary modern school.

Therefore I am proposing as an immediate objective that all 16-18 education should become non-vocational in a sense of that term which implies freedom of choice, keeping options open, putting the development of the individual first, but not in the sense of promoting purposelessness or discouraging the pursuit of career interest and relevance by the student.

compulsory day release

This leads me to a problem of the greatest urgency which colleges have astonishingly neglected - and they may have to pay heavily for this in the near future. Universal day release may be much closer in time that almost anybody realises. What preparations have been made, particularly for the reception of the reluctant? Except for odd, isolated cases, colleges have had the advantage over schools that if a student gives much trouble, they can get rid of him. One of the consequences of compulsory day release will be that colleges will be unable to get rid the the troublesome student. Mr Prentice said recently that the Government intends to introduce universal day release by legislation no later than 1977. How many colleges have even calculated the extra number of students they will have to accommodate, to say nothing of what they will do with them?

adult education

The other area which calls for urgent consideration is the assimilation into the colleges (which is surely only a matter of time) and the transformation of what has hitherto been called Adult Education. The practitioners in this field are ahead of the FE colleges in recognising the obsolescence of the non-vocational concept. The Russell Report lost much of its potential relevance and impact when its terms of reference were limited by this concept. The teachers in Adult Education are rightly apprehensive about full assimilation with FE so long as FE retains its traditional attitudes to vocational education and hence to non-vocational education.

biassed allocation of jobs and resources

One consequence of the idea that FE colleges are really about vocational education is that work perceived as non-vocational takes second priority. Vocational education gets a larger share of resources and, most important, its practioners and supporters get more than their share of senior positions and

power. The two are closely related. Most polytechnic Directors and FE college Principals are scientists or technologists and almost all the science or technology departments of polytechnics are over staffed and get an absurdly high share of the material resources available, at the expense of the other departments and communal facilities. To secure the future of non-vocational education in the colleges we need major political organisational and financial changes - changes in the basis and the way in which finances are allocated, the way appointments are made, and, most important of all, departmental reorganisation.

priorities

Finally, we have a new problem in FE which particularly affects the future of the work which is not traditional vocational work. The end of open-ended financing of colleges means that we need a system of priorities. This is not understood very widely either within the colleges or among the general public. We have come to the end of the time when colleges can aim to get all the students they can and assume that the local education authority will provide all the money needed to accommodate them. Yet many colleges still cling to this belief. Colleges will not be able to meet all demands in future and will therefore have to decide what their priorities are, and put their proposals to their governing bodies. I hope it will not be assumed that colleges must adopt a policy of "last in, first out", ie. a policy which puts the traditional vocational courses at the top of the list of priorities, and cuts out the innovations. One of the reasons why less money is available for FE is that the general public is disenchanted with our traditional approach. If we react to the present situation by becoming more conservative and deciding that this is not the time to innovate, we are digging our own graves. In my opinion we should step up the effort to make a new start, to do things in new ways and re-examine critically what we are already doing in the colleges. It is vital that we do not let the traditionalists get away with making priorities of all the established vocational courses. In my view, some of these should be the first to go, if our judgement rests on the basis of the greatest good for the greatest number of students or even on the basis of the greatest good for the economy.

To put my argument in political terms, I think the key to the future is to challenge, in some cases to radically change and in some cases to destroy existing vocational courses. The future of non-vocational education is not in a separate enclave in terms of the institution as a whole."

Discussion Arising

A member remarked that he thought Mr Robinson's outlook greatly underestimated the motivational element of vocational courses. Mr Robinson replied that many vocational courses at present frustrated students' motivation. Since many jobs were very specific to particular firms, students following the same course could have diverse jobs. The courses would therefore fit their jobs very loosely.

Another participant drew attention to the related issue of the success of 'liberal' courses in departments which formerly catered only for purely vocational students. For example, chemistry departments in attempting to allay their falling student numbers had begun to operate such courses. Mr Robinson added that often these 'non-vocational' courses turned out to provide a better vocational education than those which were intentionally planned to do so, and produce some of the best academics in the field.

The discussion then moved to the question of coping with change within colleges. As a Principal of a large and changing institution, Mr Robinson was asked how he came to terms with change, in terms of staff and organisational structure. He replied that the most important instrument of policy development was the criteria on which staff were appointed. In a sense, once a college had an academic board, one could cheat, for such a committee throws up an untypical group of staff which is committed to certain types of development and gives a legitimacy to the policy. It was vital that the criteria for staff promotion were known, seen to be applied, and linked to a staff development policy.

To make a change in the college structure was worthwhile for its own sake, especially if it had remained the same for years and years. It released opportunities for innovation which might have been blocked by the former structure.

Project A — To analyse the present situation in non-vocational further education and to identify trends.

Syndicate Reports

Syndicates considered non-vocational education at two levels: 16-19 and adult students. There was much debate about the terminology used. Did the separation of work into 'vocational' and non-vocational really have any purpose, and, indeed, was it perhaps a handicap?

Working definitions of non-vocational education were attempted. One group said that attempts to define non-vocational FE frequently followed the "all-that-is-not-poetry-is-prose" principle. This group agreed that, generally, non-vocational education had no course entry requirements, conferred no commercially negotiable qualifications and was concerned mainly with personal development, self-fulfilment and quality of life. The syndicate argued that since FE was financed from public funds colleges should continue their trend towards the provision of education for the whole community. This implied an enlargement of the role of the FE college especially in the area of adult education. If this was the case, it was paradoxical to separate vocational education and non-vocational education.

16-19 education

The aims of non-vocational education for 16-19 year old students were identified by one syndicate as broadening the curriculum of vocational courses and enriching the student as an individual. The unusual pattern was:

a) broadening the treatment of technical and scientific subjects and the inclusion of additional subjects;
b) use of libraries, discussion groups, directed private study and project methods;
c) development and encouragement of the corporate life of the college and extra-curricula activities.

The group felt there had been a conscious attempt to meet the recommendations of Circular 323 which had in many colleges led to the setting up of general and liberal studies departments, some of which were also responsible for GCE work and adult education. The syndicate thought that for the 16-19 group Crowther's four strands remained the basis of liberal/general studies programmes:

a) to help young workers find their way successfully about the world both as consumers and citizens;
b) to form standards of moral values;
c) to continue and develop pursuits and activities begun at school;
d) to improve basic education especially literacy and numeracy.

Several groups emphasised that communications studies was central to this process and identified a growing awareness of its importance.

Three types of 16-19 students were identified: block release and part-time day release students on vocational courses: full-time 16-19 students taking GCE at 'O' and 'A' level and other examinations (the traditional sixth form); and full-time 16+ students (the 'new' sixth form - a growth area).

a) part-time day and block release. The usual pattern is for one or two hours per week to be allocated for non-vocational studies of a complementary or contrasting nature. Often this is a difficult area in which to teach as many students are hostile to the concept of liberal education which is frequently timetabled in incongenial surroundings and at unpopular times. Schemes of work usually exist but are often difficult to implement. Teachers need flexibility, enthusiasm and resourcefulness. The demands of the vocational element of the students' courses tend to encroach upon time spent on non-vocational work.

b) full-time courses. The content and aims of liberal studies for full-time students and part-time students are similar but the length of time devoted to the non-vocational element is more generous, usually three to six hours per week.

For students taking GCEs, National Diplomas and full-time secretarial courses non-vocational education is often offered through a system of electives. The usual pattern is for half a day for 'O' level retakes and two half days for 'A' level classes.

As far as the 'new' sixth form, composed of non-academic students is concerned, it was felt that a more formal approach was needed on the basis of Schools Council Working Paper No. 45's recommendations. This would increase the emphasis on communications skills, knowledge and understanding of man's natural, physical and social environment, development of moral and aesthetic responsibility and sensitivity, the creative arts and physical education. One syndicate said that public examination goals such as 'A' level General Studies, AEB general studies 'O' level and CSE social studies had been found helpful in increasing motivation amongst students who 'put down' general studies.

A trend identified by one group is that since ROSLA lecturers are finding that much of the work covered previously in liberal studies courses is now being done in schools. New materials and methods involving the use of sophisticated aids such as video and cone-film making are therefore emerging.

The same syndicate also commented on the effect of college of education reorganisation. These colleges were having to re-appraise their role in the community. Apart from the provision of new academic and professional courses the colleges are considering what wider non-vocational use can be made of their art, craft, drama, music and workshop resources.

adult provision

Syndicates considered the variously organised patterns of adult non-vocational provision and decided that they fell into three main groups:

a) independent adult education institutions;
b) adult education services organised by the colleges of FE;
c) community colleges - a growth area.

Regret was expressed over the fact that there was little non-vocational education for adults in proportion to other courses, for example, only ten polytechnics provided part-time non-vocational education in the faculties of art for a total of 2, 500 students. Though fees were favourable compared with other LEA fees, the development of these courses was hampered by their low points value.

It was thought that provincial colleges tend to be more involved than others in the life of the local community. In some colleges adult education provided a form of social support in addition to the actual content of the course. Course provision arranged with due regard to the needs and aspirations of all sections of the community was seen as an important trend which manifested itself in increased concern to seek out and provide for the disadvantaged, eg. through basic literacy courses, courses for the elderly, language courses for immigrants, pre-TOPS courses and preliminary Open University courses, and to collaborate with other agencies such as Social Services, the Community Relations Council and hospitals. However, one group still thought that adult education was falling to meet the needs of the lower socio-economic groups. They said that resources should be made available for research into appropriate provision for these people.

Syndicates found that, typically, adult education was managed by a very small number of full-time staff and operated mainly by part-time staff. In general, it took place in joint-use accommodation. There was a growing demand for in-service training courses in methods of teaching basic English and numeracy to this age group.

There was an increasing tendency, in the current climate of financial stringency, to want to assess the economic and educational value of courses. The growth of leisure centres was another trend the syndicate identified. They also reported a growing demand, as yet unmet, for creches so that young mothers could continue with or return to education. The growth of student counselling and welfare services was reported.

One group felt that insufficient attention was being paid to selection and training of the part-time staff. Although some counties did have proper selection procedures and pre-service and in-service courses, there was a need for colleges everywhere to accept this as part of their staff development plan.

It was reported, that, by and large, LEAs paid lip service to the ideals of provision but had little understanding of the resources needed to enable this provision to be met.

Project B

To identify anticipated changes in non-vocational FE during the next five years and draft a generalised scheme for college development relating to non-vocational education.

Witness Session

To assist the syndicates in their discussion, four witnesses, all from different agencies concerned with non-vocational education visited each of the groups.* Dr D E Billings, Assistant Registrar (Science and Technology), CNAA, covered such areas as the Council's attitude to modular courses and the Dip. HE. Mr R P Booth, Senior Educational Adviser at the Schools Council, was able to comment on the Council's debates on the reform of the examination system at 16+, replacing the present GCE and CSEs with a system which would have the additional advantage of being common to both FE colleges and schools (CFE and CEE proposals). Mr G T Montford, Research and Development Officer, CGLI, described the foundation course feasibility study being undertaken by CGLI. These foundation courses are aimed at 16 plus students who wish to continue in full-time education but are not following GCE courses, and are being run in cooperation with schools and colleges. Mr C Ward, educational journalist and author, formerly in charge of liberal studies at Wandsworth Technical College, spoke of his desire to see colleges which answered the needs of the community, particularly in deprived urban areas. In one syndicate he remarked that colleges which had a high percentage of immigrant students were different kinds of institution from other FE colleges and the present non-vocational courses and activities were not really suitable for these colleges. The open-door or 'drop-in' policy which such colleges adopted led to situations and tensions of which FE as yet had little experience. There was some discussion of the political commitment of students and staff in many such urban colleges which was seen as both inevitable and often beneficial. Mr Ward referred to the function of the old Technical Institutes in the past, when they had been central providers of social and educational life and were highly valued by the local community. This role had tended to disappear, partly because colleges had sought for increased prestige in the educational hierarchy through the development of higher level work.

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*Witnesses spoke to the following published papers:-

J Everson — The Schools Council and examination reforms. BACIE Journal March, 1975. Vol.29, No.3.

Dr D E Billings — The Pros and Cons of modular courses. THES 8.11.74.

Dr M R Lane — Validating the Dip. HE. Coombe Lodge Report. Vol.7, No.11, 1974

CGLI Foundation Courses. Pilot Studies, 1975/76. C/9035/168/1. April, 1975. Research and Development Department, CGLI.

Syndicate Reports

Syndicates listed the external changes which were likely to have an effect on the future of non-vocational education.

diffusion

Firstly, there is likely to be a wider diffusion of educational provision in the post-school education service. This will result from changes in demographic trends, new employment patterns, increased demands for full-time education after the age of 16, the political climate and demands for education from the unemployed, the disadvantaged and the mature.

public scrutiny

Secondly, there will probably be increased public scruitny of FE, community pressure for better use of premises and resources and for an increased social therapy content in FE activities.

employment trends

While it is likely that the primacy of primary industries will be reasserted, there is unlikely to be an increase in the number of people involved. Therefore there will probably be a net shift towards service industries. This seems to indicate an increasing need to prepare students to take the best opportunities from a number of fluctuating possibilities. For example, as it will be difficult to forsee what kinds of industry will be most important in the next few years education should try to make students more able to take on a range of jobs and able to change from one to another more easily. There will be a need for retraining. There may be a shift in the traditional type of work at colleges as a result of a shift from manufacturing to servicing industries. The effect of compulsory day release, if it is instituted, will be great. Finally, while there may be a halt to any increase in standards of living in a material sense, there may be an increasing interest in improving the quality of life, which implies re-education of a certain type.

finance

Not only will there be less money available for public services in general over the next five years, because of the general economic climate, but education will have to vie for funds with other social services. FE will have to compete with other branches of education such as primary schools, which may be given priority. Syndicates felt, however, that within the post-school sector, FE stood a better chance than the universities.

other education agencies

The effect of developments in other agencies concerned with education will be felt in FE over the next few years, eg. universities, polytechnics, schools, the Open University, broadcasting and voluntary organisations. They would have an impact on such things as the development of tertiary education for the 16 - 19 age group, new entry qualifications to courses, colleges as 'feeders' to other types of institution, links between schools and colleges aimed at maximising resource utilisation, and new forms of learning.

regulating agencies	Developments will take place in agencies such as the DES, RACs and other Government agencies, examining bodies, trade unions and professional bodies, leading to the rationalisation of provision and closer control of capital expenditure on a local, sub-regional or regional basis. This would lead to regulations concerning the allocation of courses to husband resources, changes in examinations, trends towards the broadening of the curriculum, the stimulation of retraining, agreed equivalents and the increasingly efficient use of staff.
	The syndicates then listed the ways in which they believed colleges would respond to these external pressures.
community involvement	Colleges would become increasingly involved in the community. There would be an increase in adult provision and provision for disadvantaged groups, and young housewives who would need creche facilities for their children.
outreach	There is likely to be a growth of 'outreach' facilities both in order to meet the greater community commitment and to eke out limited accommodation by using industrial and community premises.
course structure	There will be a development of more flexible course provision based upon modular schemes where appropriate and other arrangements for maximising the use of resources, enabling the colleges to respond more readily to changing circumstances, meeting student's needs more appropriately, avoiding arbitrary distinctions between vocational and non-vocational training, encouraging recurrent education and developing a student-orientated system involving the creation of an effective information and counselling service for all students, whatever their age, together with a variety of teaching methods designed to give students individual responsibility for learning and a consequent increase in motivation.
general education	There is likely to be increased provision for the less academic student with a shift towards general education.
participation	There will probably be increased democratisation of the college organisational structure with a larger representation of adult and other non-vocational interests. There will probably be an increase in the number of teaching staff with political or social involvements.
support staff	There will be a need for more non-teaching staff of all kinds.
accommodation	Colleges will have to review the use made of accommodation. This will lead to more effective coordination of supply, maintenance and use of resources, and central rather than departmental control of accommodation.
external links	Systems will develop to create or confirm working links with other college, schools and community agencies.

Review of Syndicate Reports

The syndicate findings were presented to J Chadderton, who commented upon them and then outlined some of the difficulties he saw facing colleges over the next five years. Finally, he described some of the ways Newcastle upon Tyne was attempting to tackle the problems.

J Chadderton, Director of Education, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Commenting on the syndicate reports, Mr Chadderton said that he agreed with much of what they said. He felt that members had been over-optimistic in their conception of what could be achieved within a five year period. Moreover, as many colleges had already undergone some fairly traumatic changes, such as mergers, he urged caution. People who had already had to make major adjustments could not be expected to do the same again so quickly.

Mr Chadderton agreed that there was a possibility of resources being made available for FE more readily than for the university sector. There was certainly a belief in the north-east that universities had received too large a share of national resources in the past, and the time had now come to redress the balance.

The ploughing of resources into facilities for the disadvantaged was also likely to occur. Already Newcastle was beginning to do this, and he felt the idea would spread through the country. If the concept of educational priority areas was used for primary and secondary education, there seemed no reason why it should not be used in FE as well.

On the suggestion by the syndicates that colleges would, over the next few years, examine their resources and redeploy them in a more efficient way, Mr Chadderton commented that although this was a splendid concept, it was difficult in practice because there was normally such inertia, a desire to leave things as they were because that was easiest. But if the colleges did not seriously consider redeployment themselves, someone else would do it for them, which would be still less pleasant.

Turning to the concept of political awareness, Mr Chadderton said this was now critical for educationalists in local government. The disadvantages of local government reorganisation were familiar. But one advantage was that for the first time many LEAs had a written education policy document, to which administrators in the education service could refer. Such documents summarised the aims and ambitions of the political party in power. It now ought to be possible to know what the local political party in control wished to do, and to get some idea of the timescale. Knowledge of this information was vital for a knowledge of what was attainable since this could only be achieved in the light of broad policy laid down locally.

Mr Chadderton then spoke of difficulties involved in the development of non-vocational education, especially adult provision.

1) Building programme. The lack of a separate adult education building programme had always bee a major weakness. One of the strengths of the nursery education programme was the fact that it had its own building programme. While pooling of a variety of different programmes did allow local discretion, when this was accompanied by an overall reduction in resources the effect was that some of the developments suggested by the syndicates could not occur. The reduction in overall higher education and further education building programmes coupled with pressure from vocational courses would inevitably cut out a lot of potential non-vocational work. Moreover over the next five years there were unlikely to be any additional minor works in depressed areas as in past years,

2) Link courses took up spare capacity in many colleges partly on good sound educational grounds, partly as a result of expediency.

3) The right to day release. Some LEAs such as Sheffield and Newcastle were pressing for 16 - 18 year olds to be able to claim the right to day release, and the matter has been discussed in AMA and ACC.

4) Pressure from other areas with an emotional appeal eg. nursery education. Even in these areas some LEAs did not take up all of their allocation and some did not take any of it. This shows the stringency of the financial constraints under which some local authorities were having to operate. If the polytechnics had to compete with nursery education for resources, the polytechnics would lose; if FE colleges had to compete with nursery education, FE would probably lose, and if adult education has to compete with nursery education, it did not stand a chance.

5) New national conditions of service especially since the Houghton pay award, had provoked an adverse reaction amongst some elected councillors towards FE teachers. In some areas a very tough line was being taken and there was a determination not to give the teachers any more.

6) The "middle class image" of adult education seemed more tarnished in a Labour controlled urban area such as Newcastle. Many councillors and officers were ignorant of what adult education really meant, and they often viewed it as "not really education". Sometimes there was also an underlying fear of adult education, a feeling that the ABCA scheme had led to the fall of Churchill, and so on.

9) Other preoccupations of LEAs were numerous, and made it difficult to believe that there could be any major developments in FE over the next five years. They included:-

a) Local Government reorganisation. The boundaries have changed to such an extent that the new authorities have inherited a varied pattern. It would take so much time to bring together all the different systems that there would be little opportunity for rationalisation.

b) Reorganisation of secondary education.

c) Reorganising direct grant schools so that they would become part of the state system, go independent or close.

d) Nursery expansion.

e) The development of corporate management systems.

f) A review of standards of literacy and numeracy.

g) Rationalisation of further and higher education through the merging of colleges, polytechnics and other institutions.
h) The development of activities of TEC and BEC.

All educational hands, therefore were more than full. If anything was going to be made to happen in non-vocational adult education it was dependent upon efforts of strong pressure groups. But this would be effective only if it was based upon knowledge of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the individuals involved and where pressure could be successfully applied. Within the new corporate management structures, the personality, previous experience and record of a Director of Education may make him either a significant figure or merely a cipher .

Mr Chadderton then spoke of developments in Newcastle and indicated ways in which non-vocational adult education could be promoted.

"selling" adult education

"There are a number of possible approaches to the 'selling' of adult education. The various options have to be considered and a decision made on which will work best in the light of the political party in control locally. The independence of the LEA can be stressed. The LEA can be persuaded to act without waiting for DES directives. For adult education in particular, emphasis might be put on the ultimate economic gain to the nation of having a well educated population, the political development of the individual through adult education (this would be more acceptable to a Labour authority than a Conservative one), the development of trades union education (as in Sweden), preparation for retirement and the fact that as a resource, the capacity of adults to learn had hardly been tapped.

total community involvement

Some syndicates mentioned the possibility of linking adult education with all types of higher and further education and also schools. There must be a carefully thought out overall development plan for this type of scheme and it must be related to the resources available. In some areas, schools were regarded as the power-houses of the neighbourhood. For example, Newcastle upon Tyne has inherited adult associations closely attached to schools in the country, and they operated with a good deal of local democracy. In Northumberland in 1966 the first appointment was made of a Deputy Head for FE attached to a school and now there were 18 such posts. These Deputy Heads spent about 15% of their time working in the schools and the remainder in adult education and youth work. There is a responsibility to help young people to transfer easily from schools to adult life. Therefore the Youth Service, Junior Leisure Centres and Summer Play Schemes all come under the Assistant Director for Further Education.

flexibility

There had been a major attempt to create a flexible system of adult education. Newcastle had introduced the concept of the leisure card, which costs £5 and enabled students over 16 to attend as many adult courses as they wished for a year subject to availability. The cost to those under 18 was reduced to 75p and was waived altogether for pensioners, widows and people receiving supplementary benefit.

Another aspect of the flexibility of the Newcastle approach was that adult associations were run by the students with their own allocation of money (90 out of each £5 fee collected). These associations were self-programming and put on events which the LEA would not finance in normal circumstances.

development of classes

There was a need for a properly-constructed development programme, otherwise demands would build up which the LEA could not meet. Attention had been given to establishing education for the disadvantaged. Some schemes involved going out to handicapped and old people not only in schools, but also in homes and in informal groups in such places as shops, so as to avoid the hostility they might feel towards coming on to college premises. Newcastle was operating literacy programmes run by 80 volunteers who went out to teach people who could not read. It was operated on a one-to-one basis. The City has just begun to pay their travelling expenses and next year for the first time will introduce paid supervision to coordinate the work of the volunteers. Other classes were operated where it was felt that there was a social need, eg. English as a foreign language and lip-reading and sign language for the deaf and dumb.

Another recent development was that of ad hoc courses on house purchase, law for the layman, public enquiries and so on.

There would also be an increase in the amount of teacher training given to part-time lecturers, who traditionally had received so little.

cooperation

In order to rationalise resource utilisation there was cooperation between adult education and the University, WEA and other bodies, and joint caravans have been set up outside the Civic Centre and on the Town Moor.

Finally, the importance of the label attached to adult education activities must not be forgotten, eg whether it is termed 'evening classes' or 'adult education' or 'leisure pursuits'."

A H Yates,
Director,
Coombe Lodge,

COMPULSORY PART TIME EDUCATION IN WEST GERMANY

The conference ended with a discussion of compulsory part-time education in West Germany and its possible application in the UK. Mr Yates described a study of the German system he had made with Neil Merrit, Vice-Principal of the Mid-Essex Technical College and School of Art, in 1974*, beginning by drawing some comparisons with the situation in England.

the UK situation

"In 1893 the school leaving age was raised from 10 to 11 years. Contemporary educational journals reveal that the same arguments were used against this development as have been heard more recently when the age was raised to 15 in 1947 and to 16 in 1972. The objections came from pupils who wanted to leave school and enter employment as soon as possible; from their parents who relied on the income their 10 year olds brought home; from teachers who did not think they would be able to control reluctant pupils of this age group; and from employers who said that industry would suffer a set-back if these young workers were withdrawn. The general pattern seems to have been that these objections are repeated for two or three years but gradually lapse and the new school leaving age becomes accepted generally. Few people, for example, would now advocate lowering it to 14.

In addition to raising the school leaving age, Parliament said in 1918 that it would introduce compulsory part-time education for young people who had left school up to the age of 18. During the last war and in the 1944 Act there was considerable debate about whether to introduce day release or block release up to the age of 18. It was proposed that it would take place in a new type of institution, a county college. In the event, of course, the proposal was never implemented.

Thus in 50 years the UK has achieved nothing with regard to compulsory day release, in a century when startling developments have taken place. This seems to me to be an astonishing failure.

The debate still goes on however. The DES have made it clear that compulsory day release would not be considered at present, although they are now mooting the possibility of optional release. This would entail an Act which decreed that those young people who wished could demand the right to part-time release from their employers, presumably with pay. The implications of this have not yet been fully worked out. It seems clear to me that employers would ask 16

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*Merritt N.and Yates A.H.Compulsory Part-Time Education in West Germany. Coombe Lodge. College Management. Readings and Cases. Vol.4. June, 1974.

year olds whom they interview for jobs whether they intend to take part-time release and would favour those who did not. Another alternative would be to implement the 1944 Act and introduce compulsory day release. I was surprised to see that this was proposed in the Labour Party Manifesto last year, for it does not seem to have much general support.

The extent to which young people already get continued education in Britain can be seen from DES statistics for 1970. The numbers of 16 year olds and their education were:-

Total number of 17 year olds		771,000	(100%)
of these:	At School	156,900	(20.3%)
	In full-time FE	43,000	(5.6%)
	Part-time day in FE	141,300	(18.3%)
	Evening only in FE	94,700	(12.3%)
so that:	Left all education	334,000	(43.5%)

It is interesting to note that 18.3% attend in their own time after work, apparently unable to get day release from their employment and that 43% of 17 year olds are already out of touch with formal education. If compulsory day release were implemented the system would absorb both these groups and these would require the provision of 160,000 extra places in FE in terms of full-time equivalents. This sounds formidable, until one realises that the raising of the school leaving age to 16 entailed the provision of 550,000 full-time places in schools. Therefore to have compulsory day release for 16-18s would cost only one third as much as ROSLA, and, of course, it could be done in stages.

Before making the visit to West Germany we contacted various groups and organisations in Britain to make ourselves aware of their views on the implementation of compulsory day release. This was done in order for us to be able to compare the problems expected in Britain with the actuality in Germany.

1. Cost: Many organisations - the TUC, CBI, TSA, DES - drew attention to the cost of implementing the 1944 Act and said that at present no Government could afford it. Of course, it is true that the economic climate at the present time makes it unlikely, but this does not mean that it could not happen within, say, the next ten years.

2. Young People's Views: Some 16-18 year olds - those 20% for example who already give up their evenings to attend classes - would welcome compulsory day release. Most of the others would probably accept some change in the law, but many would not relish compulsory attendance. Absenteeism from schools in the final year provides some evidence for this.

3. Employers: The CBI indicated that employers would not care for compulsory day release. It would be an inconvenience for small firms to lose their young employees one (or two) days per week. Some employers would find it easier to plan for block release rather than day release. Employers may feel that the young people they employ for five days a week would only be working for them for four days and regard this as an extra cost. The CBI did point out, however, in its evidence on the proposal to raise the school leaving age to 16, that it would be happy for the last year of full-time compulsory education to be spent either in school or in an FE college. The TUC, however, preferred school.

4. Parents: If employers reduced wages on the introduction of day release, there might be some opposition from parents. However, the raising of the school leaving age to 16 lost five days wages each week for the 15 year olds, so opposition would be probably weaker than it was in 1972.

5. Educationalists: FE teachers have never been wildly enthusiastic about compulsory day release, although the ATTI supports it. Some FE colleges have little or no experience of part-time students taking non-vocational courses and many would prefer other sectors of education eg. adult education to receive priority.

West Germany

Since 1924 it has been a requirement of West German law that all young persons not in full-time education in the 15-18 age group should attend, on a part-time basis, vocational school - the Berufsschule - for one or two days per week. We were told by both the teachers and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce that the acute shortage of teachers, which meant that most students attended for only one day a week, was most regrettable.

The legal requirement to attend Berufsschule is ultimately linked to a judicial process. It is possible to secure attendance by force of appearance in court and the imposition of a fine up to £80. However, resort to the legal process is rare. The general level of attendance is high. This is probably because 85% of the age group are apprentices (compared with 15% in the UK) and non-attendance leads to cancellation of the apprenticeship. This is a serious blow to future prospects. Among the 15% of the 15-18 year olds who are not apprentices absenteeism is more common - about 30% of this group might be absent from college. However, this is only 1% or 2% of the total age group. Our conclusion therefore was that compulsory day release is generally approved and accepted in West Germany.

In line with the great variety of fields in which young people take apprenticeships, there are a wide range of Berufsschulen. They occupy buildings also used for full-time specialist vocational education and specialise not only in such trades as engineering and allied fields, but also the commercial and administrative professions, nursing, domestic science, banking, agriculture and so on. Quite a number of young people begin their apprenticeships late, at 17 or 18, but they still have to attend Berufsschule during their apprenticeship.

The Chambers of Commerce supervise the 'training-plan' and the final examination is set and assessed by a committee often consisting of three representatives each of the Chamber of Commerce, the DGB (equivalent to our TEC) and the teachers in Berufsschulen. The involvement of the Chambers of Commerce in training means that there is little resistance to the scheme from employers. However there is some pressure from the Social Democrats for a new training law, which the Chambers of Commerce fear would transfer some of their powers to the state. They would resist this since they represent the employers who pay for the training and would therefore wish to retain full control over it.

The Berufsschulen are in fact more like secondary schools than our FE colleges. They operate on a timetable similar to that of a school, and their syllabuses are detailed and laid down jointly by industry, teachers and the Ministry of Education.

Our conclusion was that compulsory day release has been accepted in West Germany and there is no move to abolish it. The problems which we fear would arise in this country if it were introduced seem to have been overcome."

Discussion Arising

Was it essential to belong to a union and take an apprenticeship in those fields where apprenticeships were available? Mr Yates explaines that there were no closed shops and anyone could set himself up in a trade without having taken an apprenticeship. However, he would not be allowed to take on any apprentices himself and this was a great handicap.

The discussion then turned to the question of truancy, which took up much of the time available. Members spoke of the high truancy rates among 16 year old school leavers and the general reluctance to enforce attendance laws. They commented that this argued badly for compulsory day release. Mr Yates felt that this was not necessarily the case. Truancy among 16 year olds would probably decrease after a few years, as they began to accept the fact that they had to stay on at school.

Members

D E Barber	Head of Department of Liberal Education, Nelson and Colne College, Lancs.
G S Barr	Depute Principal, James Watt College, Greenock, Renfrewshire.
S Butters	Principal, Cregagh Technical College, Belfast.
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Visiting Speakers and Witnesses

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C A Blackman	Head of Faculty of Humanities & Business Studies, Garnett College.
R P Booth	Senior Educational Adviser, Schools Council.
J Chadderton	Director of Education, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
Mrs O Foss	Assistant Director, City and Guilds of London Institute.
Sir Alan Richmond	Principal, Strode College, Street.
E E Robinson	Principal, The Bradford College of Art and Technology.
C Ward	Educational Journalist and Author.

Conference Tutors

J R Robinson	Principal, Loughton College of Further Education.
A Albrecht	Staff Tutor, Coombe Lodge.
T J Russell	Staff Tutor, Coombe Lodge.
C M Turner,	Staff Tutor, Coombe Lodge.

Other Participating Coombe Lodge Staff

D C Spencer	Senior Staff Tutor.

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